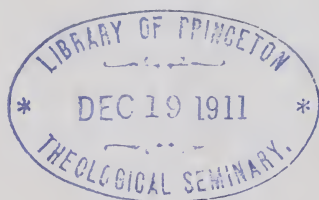


IN THE
LAND OF THE LAMAS

THE STORY OF TRASHILHAMO

THE LAMAS OF THE LAND OF THE LAMAS



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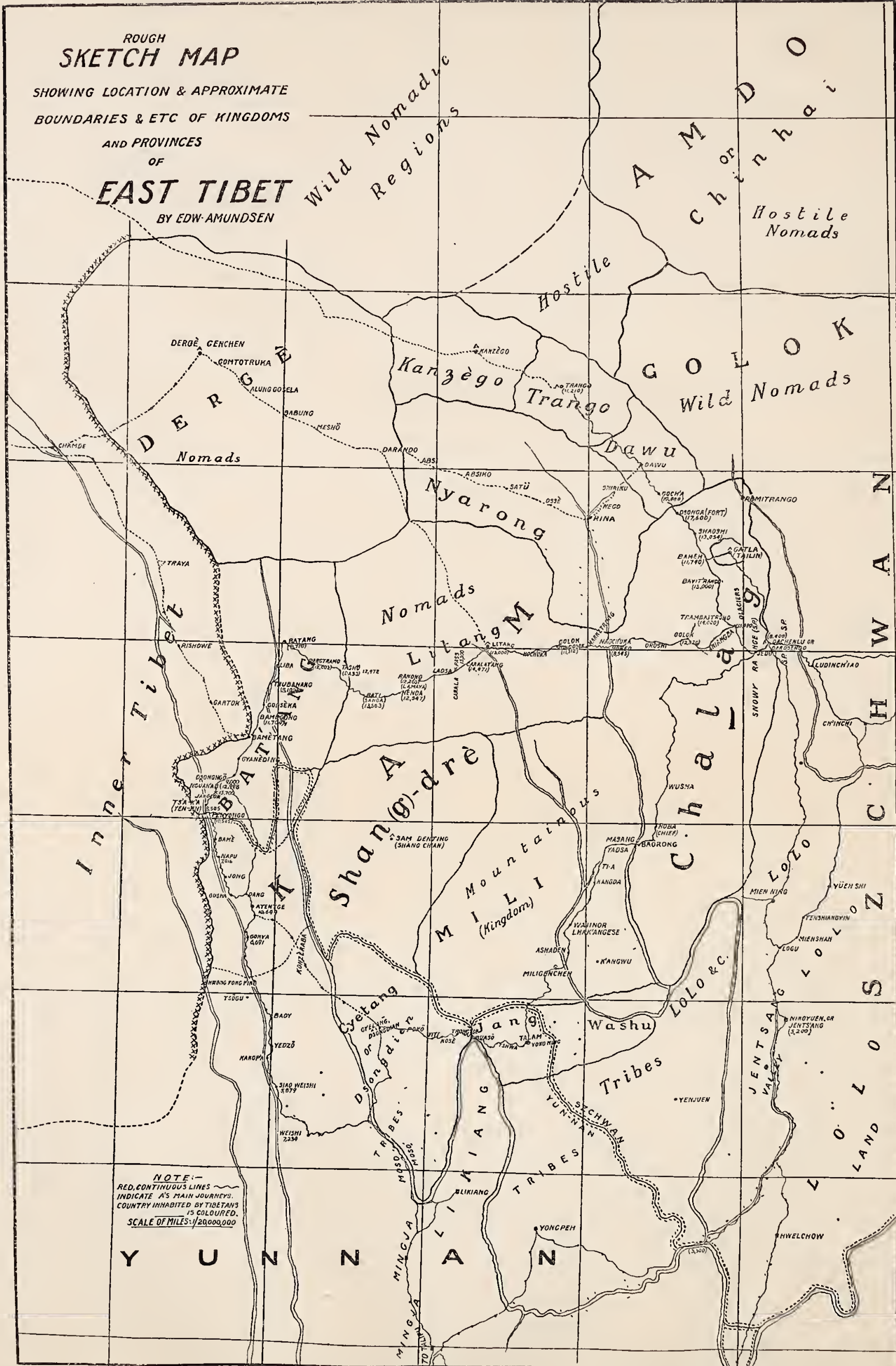


IN THE LAND OF THE LAMAS

BY EDW. AMUNDSEN

Wild Nomadic
Regions

A M D O
Ch or n h a i
Hostil
Nomads



IN THE LAND OF THE LAMAS

THE STORY OF TRASHILHAMO
A TIBETAN LASSIE

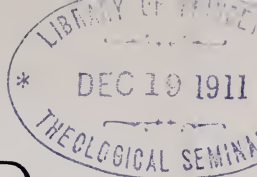
In which are described Tibetan
Character, Life, Customs, and History

✓
BY
EDWARD AMUNDSEN, F.R.G.S.

Reviser of "Henderson's Tibetan Manual";
Author of "Primer of Standard Tibetan," "Short Cut to Western Mandarin," etc.

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For this, and other kind help given in the publication of the volume, the Author desires to record his very deep gratitude.

YUNNANFU,
S.-W. CHINA,
August 16th, 1910.



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INTRODUCTION

MANY books have been written about Tibet and the Tibetans, but Mr. Amundsen, so far as we know, is the first writer to give us a picture of Tibetan family and social life; and he has done this most happily, not by writing an account of his personal observations, but by telling us the life story of Trashilhamo, a Tibetan maid. Her experiences, we venture to think, will be as instructive to the student of sociology as they will be fascinating to the general reader.

Mr. Amundsen, moreover, has wisely used his intimate knowledge of the country and people to place the story in its proper setting. The Trashilhamo of these pages is a true type of a Tibetan girl in a real Tibetan home. Her joys and hopes, her difficulties and sufferings, are just those of a daughter of that benighted and lama-ridden land.

Few men are better qualified than the author to write such a story, for he has lived amongst the people and is a master of their language. First on the Indo-Tibetan frontier, then on the Chinese frontier as a member of the "Tibet Mission Band" of the China Inland Mission, then at Ghoom, in connection with Scandinavian Alliance Mission Press, and later, as a representative of the British

Introduction

and Foreign Bible Society, with Yunnan and the Tibetan Marches as his field, he has spent sixteen years in the service of Tibet and the Tibetans.

Naturally, Mr. Amundsen has written from the missionary standpoint, and his story is a pathetic plea for a people who, alas! are less accessible to the messenger of the Cross than almost any other people in the world. From frontier stations in India and China the Gospel is being preached, and in a few Tibetan lives, as in that of Trashilhamo, the power and grace of the Lord Jesus have been revealed; but the day of the open door and the wide opportunity has not yet come. The waiting has been long and faith has been severely tried; but the night is far spent and those who watch for the morning are bold in hope and sure of an ultimate victory. If the number of those who pray for the opening of Tibet, and for the devoted workers who watch at its portals is increased, the object of Mr. Amundsen in publishing this story will be accomplished.

May Trashilhamo's life help forward the opening of her country to Him who has opened to us all the door of everlasting life.

G. H. BONDFIELD.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY,
SHANGHAI.

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FAMILIAR TYPES IN THE LAND OF THE LAMAS.

1. On pilgrimage to Lhasa. 2. Charcoal woman of Batang. 3. Treasurer of a Tachienlu Lamasery. 4. A beggar lama sitting near to the hut in which he lives.

THE FORBIDDEN LAND

A Preliminary Chapter Describing Tibet, its People, Customs, and Religions

THERE are to-day but few parts of the earth's surface which have preserved their secrets from the enterprise of the modern explorer, but high up in Central Asia, lying on the very roof of the world, the land of Tibet forcibly shuts its door in the face of everyone who comes to it seeking admission. The traveller from without is not wanted behind those gigantic hills which serve the dual purpose of defence and barrier, and if one or two more intrepid than the others have passed in disguise within its portals they have learned but little of the strange people who are content to keep to themselves, and who have no desire for communication with the other races of the earth. The land of Tibet has no dealings with the great world that lies beyond its steep mountain ranges, and its chief desire seems to be that the outside world shall leave it to itself and not attempt to probe its mysteries.

But this is much more than human nature is ever willing to concede. Wherever there is mystery, there, too, is the endeavour to fathom it, and adventurous man, always anxious to add to the sum of human knowledge, will only cease his striving when there are no more worlds to conquer and no further secrets to be revealed. So far

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only a little piece of the curtain which separates Tibet from the rest of the world has been lifted, giving but a partial and imperfect glimpse of the land and the people; but yet, in spite of the country's isolation, we know something of its history and its customs.

Comprising an area of 700,000 square miles, and being thus eight times the size of Great Britain, Tibet is the loftiest region of such extent on the globe, and, safe within its huge girdle of mountains, it follows its own course, utterly indifferent to the great movements of the peoples and the empires lying beyond its ken. "The whole of Tibet," one exploring traveller tells us, "is like a sea, the gigantic waves of which, driven up by northern or southern winds, have been changed into stone at the moment of their worst fury."

As would be expected in a region whose tablelands vary in height from 17,000 to 10,000 feet, the climate is cold and extreme, an Arctic winter prevailing for five or six months of the year. The summer is short, but exceedingly hot. Naturally the conditions do not lend themselves to the development of agriculture on any large scale, but the minerals are numerous and of high value, gold, silver, iron, and copper being among the products of the country. The preparation of woollen cloth, however, forms the chief industrial occupation, and the Tibetans, being active traders, large caravans, in which yak and sheep are the beasts of burden, are constantly traversing the country on their way to the great fairs.

The history of this strange and forbidden land goes back to a very early period. "The achievements of civilisation were slow in permeating this region, and it was long before the seeds of progress sprang up from the barren ground." It is assumed, and with good reason, that the Tibetan peoples must originally have lived on

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the lowest grade of human existence, following the life of hunters and finding their subsistence upon the animals which in great herds covered the country, nature thus providing a sufficient substitute for the poverty of the soil, which was quite unable to produce what was required to support life.

In the Book of the Kings, a Tibetan history, "which appeared only comparatively late under the influence of Chinese models," is a legendary account of the prehistoric period, and while the details of this story cannot be accepted as in any degree trustworthy, the record is interesting in as far as it shows the sources from which the Tibetans themselves derived their civilisation.

According to this, "there appeared, in the first century, B.C., in the country to the south of the modern Lhasa, a marvellously endowed child, whom the natives soon regarded as their heaven-sent leader. This child, an invention clearly on the model of the infant Dalai-Lamas of a later age, was a direct descendant of Buddha. He founded a kingdom, the subjects of which were gradually raised by his successors to higher grades of culture, precisely in the way in which Chinese legend traces the progress of civilisation. Under the seventh monarch, in the second century A.D., smelting, the use of the plough, and irrigation were discovered. In the fifth century the fields were enclosed, articles of clothes were made from leather, and walnut trees were planted."

Towards the close of the sixth century history is seen becoming distinct from legend, and Tibet is found in touch with India and China, assimilating some of the civilisation of the former and resisting the encroachment of the jealous Chinese. Even in these days Lhasa was the capital of the empire and the focus of the religious life which had its source in the Buddhist religion.

In the Land of the Lamas

“During the whole of the eighth century Tibet remained the leading power in the south of Central Asia, and a formidable enemy of China, the capital of which was actually stormed and plundered by the Tibetans in the year 763. It was not until 820 that a permanent peace was concluded between Tibet and China, and a pillar with an inscription was erected in Lhasa to commemorate the event.”

During the ninth century Tibet reached the zenith of its glory, but from that period onwards a waning of its power began to be felt, and slowly, but none the less surely, the Land of the Lamas lost its position of pre-eminence; the eastern portion of the country became broken up into small states, thus opening the door to Chinese and Mogul invasion.

As the years passed by, the greedy eyes of China were set with more and more eagerness on her near neighbour; the designs of the great empire became more persistent, and Tibet gradually found it increasingly difficult to shake off this gigantic enemy that was always knocking at the door. Finally, in 1720, the Chinese succeeded in conquering Tibet, and the humiliation of being subject to that invading power rankles sorely in the minds of the Tibetans to this day. China, however, interferes only with foreign and military affairs. Two imperial Chinese delegates reside at Lhasa; but the Tibetan clergy still retain the reins of civil and religious government, as they did in the old Papal states.

In 1850, Sikkim, a frontier state through which passes an important route from India into Tibet, became a dependency of the British Crown, and in 1888 it was the object of attack by a strong Tibetan force, the invaders being repelled by Anglo-Indian troops, when the Chinese government declined to interfere in the dispute. Some

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years later, when the Tibetans failed in their observance of the terms of the Anglo-Chinese Sikkim Convention of 1890, Sir Francis Younghusband, in 1904, led an expedition into the country, which fought its way into the capital, from which the Dalia Lama had fled. A treaty was eventually signed in the famous Potala palace monastery, and the British force withdrew, having accomplished not a little in laying the basis of better trade facilities and in breaking down in some measure the barrier that had hidden Tibet from the rest of the world.

Not unnaturally, in view of the fact that the Tibetans have for long centuries lived behind closed doors, there exists a curiosity with respect to this strange people and their modes of living. Regarding their customs not a great deal is known. The inhabitants of the country, who number, it has been calculated, between two and three millions, are of a semi-civilised Mongolian race somewhat akin to the Burmese. "In the north they are nomadic, but in the south they are settled in substantial houses of stone or sun-dried brick, and cultivate the soil along the river valleys. The industries are not important, but there is a considerable trade with China, and wool, furs, musk, gold and precious stones are exported. The language of the people is similar to the Chinese, but has taken on polysyllabic characters. A considerable amount of literature, mainly religious, has been accumulated, and printing has been practised for centuries."

Owing to the isolation of the country, some archaic customs survive, one of these being polyandry. The husbands of one wife are generally brothers, and this form of marriage, which is almost universal among the poor, is said to give rise to less domestic harmony than might be expected. One traveller who made a journey through a great part of Tibet in the guise of a Chinese

In the Land of the Lamas

trader expresses the opinion, based on his own personal observation and on what the natives told him, that polyandry exists only in agricultural districts. "Whatever be the marriage customs prevailing in a locality," he adds, "the wife is procured by purchase as among the tribes of the Koko-nor, and as soon as the woman has entered the home of her husband she assumes control of nearly all his affairs; no buying or selling is done, except by her or with her consent and approval. She is the recognised head of the house. This pre-eminent position of women in Tibetan society has been from of old one of the peculiarities of this race, of which parts have frequently been governed by women, as evidenced by the history of the state of Eastern Tibet, called Nu Kuo by Chinese historians, where a queen always ruled, the male population being only warriors and tillers of the soil."

The same writer notes what he describes as one of the most peculiar and objectionable habits of Tibetan women—the smearing of their faces with a thick black paste, composed of grease and cutch, called teu-ja. "They say they use it as a salve to protect their skins from the dry wind which would chap them and make them rough. The lamas tell another story. They say that Démo Rinpoch'é, who lived in the latter part of the eighteenth century, and who is one of the greatest of their latter-day saints, ordered all the women of Lhasa to disfigure themselves thus whenever they showed themselves in public. This drastic measure was necessitated by the daily increasing disorders among the monks, whose composure was being continually upset by the sight of the pretty faces of the women, and who forgot the rule of their order which prescribed that when walking abroad they must keep their eyes fixed on the ground, and look neither to the right nor to the left, and had not eyes

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enough to look at the rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed maidens they met. The women obeyed the order, and soon the paste became as much the fashion as is the veil in other countries."

Tibet is a religious country, if by that phrase we mean a land in which religious observances are rigorously practised. But between the keeping of forms and the living of a godly life there is a deep gulf fixed, and this Asiatic people, with all their ceremonials, have yet to learn the real meaning of religion and what it can accomplish in the heart and life of the individual. In their religious beliefs, however, as in their commercial and other relations, the Tibetans are blissfully content to keep to their own forms. Happy in the conviction that they have nothing to learn from peoples and races lying outwith the boundaries of their own isolated country, they regard with a satisfied contempt all customs and religions other than their own, and with a complacency that is really pathetically humorous they pride themselves on the fact that they are not as others are. This frame of mind is not, of course, peculiar to the Tibetans, but one scarcely expects to find it in a semi-civilised people, and it is a mental condition which makes it exceedingly difficult to create new impressions on the mind or to introduce influences that would point the way to progress and enlightenment.

While Lamaism is the chief religion in Tibet, there is also another form of religious belief known as the Bon or Bon-Pa creed, which is a development of Mongol Shammanism, and is the native religion. To go far back into the dim ages of Tibetan history, we find that Buddhism made its way into the country from India, and the fall of the political power of the country has been attributed to the fact that Buddhism then permeated the

In the Land of the Lamas

country, crippled the secular power, and effected a thorough spiritual revolution in the minds of the people. "Buddhism soon assumed a peculiar character in that isolated land," one historical writer tells us. "The priests of Tibet showed little appreciation of the more subtle theological and philosophical disputes and doctrines of their Indian or Chinese co-religionists. But all the more important was the influence of the originally Shammanistic national religion, which exalted the Buddhist clergy and monks into magicians and ascribed to them all the various arts of a degraded mysticism. This is the explanation of the commanding position which the Buddhist priesthood was able to acquire in Tibet, and of the chaos of superstitious ideals which gradually spread thence over Central Asia."

Lamaism came into the country at a later period, and it is the religion which to-day is generally adopted in Tibet. Not an independent religion in itself, it is, in fact, Buddhism corrupted by Sivaism, and by Shammanism or spirit worship, with the adoration of the saints as its main feature. According to historical records, when Padma-Sambhava first preached Buddhism to the Tibetans he took great pains to adapt it to the capacity of his hearers, and even to their prejudices. As it was impossible to drive out their ancestral mysticism, practice of magic and devil worship, all of these continued to form elements in Lamaism, in which system the "cosmogony of Buddhism is preserved intact with the Buddhistic conception of heaven and hell, and the Buddhistic canon of morality, and, like the system of the 'Enlightened One', Lamaism knows no worship but that of saints."

The four spirit kings are, Inda, the god of the firmament; Yama, the god of death and the infernal regions; Yamântaka, or Siva as the avenger in his most formidable



TYPES OF THE PEOPLE OF TIBET.

1. A Batang woman carrying a sack of Dsamba. 2. A young lama standing beside a large prayer wheel. 3. The living Buddha in Batang: an "incarnation" of Gautama, an object of veneration. 4. Batang lumberman with his little son.

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shape ; and Vaisravana, or the god of wealth. In addition to these, there are numerous guardian and other demons who receive worship. In Lamaism the reciting of prayers and sacred texts, and the singing of hymns, accompanied with loud and inharmonious music, are the principal observances. The worship takes place three times a day, the clergy being summoned by the ringing of a bell, and they sit in rows according to their rank. On special occasions the shrines and altars are brightly decorated with symbols of various kinds, and offerings are made of tea, flour, milk, and other things of a similar nature, offerings of flesh being forbidden. The priests busy themselves with rosaries, prayer wheels and charms, while not infrequently rites of magic are given a place in public worship ; charms are recited, spells are cast, incantations made, and the worshippers consult those who are reputed to be diviners, necromancers or astrologers.

In connection with Lamaism there are three great annual festivals—in February when the return of spring is celebrated as the triumph of Buddha over six heretical teachers ; the second and most ancient of the three holy days is held in commemoration of the incarnation of Buddha and marks the day of his mundane conception ; while the third, known as the Water Festival, marks the approach of autumn and the fall of fertilising rain. Baptism and admission to discipleship are the two principal rites in this religion. The former is administered on the third or tenth day after birth, and the latter as soon as the child can walk or speak. Although marriage is a civil contract, the lama fixes the day for the ceremony and demands payment, and he also receives gifts for rescuing the dead from Yama by religious rites and incantations. “It is the lama that attends the dying man or woman to see that dissolution between body and soul is properly

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accomplished, and to guide the soul to the western paradise." At death the bodies are not buried in the ground. In the case of persons who have been distinguished by rank, learning or piety the remains are cremated, but the general method is to expose the dead body in the open air and leave it to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey.

In the Lamaist hierarchy there are two spiritual heads or Popes—the Dalai Lama whose seat is at the hill of Potala near Lhasa, and the Tashi Lama, who lives in the monastery of Tashi Lunpo, near Shigatse, the second town of importance in Tibet, and while theoretically both of these spiritual rulers hold the same rank and authority, the Dalai Lama has the larger diocese, and his influence is consequently greater. Other two ranks come below these, and these orders are supposed to be the reincarnations of the Buddhist saints. It is an article of this strange creed that when the Grand Lama dies his soul is reborn in some child whose birth is coincident in time with his death. Sometimes the dying lama announces the name of the family in which he is about to reappear, but frequently the point has been decided by the casting of lots, though it is said that the Emperor of China has now great influence in settling it.

Besides the orders already mentioned, there are four orders of lower clergy—the pupil or novice, who generally enters the order in his seventh or ninth year, the assistant priest, the religious mendicant, and the teacher or abbot. Tibet has a larger proportion of priests to the population than any other country in the world; all of them must take the vow of celibacy, and as the greater number live in lamaseries or convents, few parts of the land are without one or more of these religious houses. Lhasa has numerous monasteries, the largest of these

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containing upwards of 8,000 monks. The lamasery consists of a central temple surrounded by buildings in which are cells, libraries, refectories, etc. Each convent is in charge of an abbot. The rules of the larger lamaseries are said to be very strict, "and while," as one writer puts it, "crimes can usually be compounded by the payment of fines, the misdemeanours of the lower-class lamas are punished by whipping, solitary confinement or expulsion. The ecclesiastical authorities have, even within the limits of China, power of life and death over the lamas of their convents; the civil authorities can not, or rather do not choose to, assail their prerogatives, and generally submit without demur to the decisions of the ecclesiastical courts."

Though the lamas are supposed to be in constant prayer for the welfare of the locality in which they reside, and are frequently consulted by the laity with regard to the success of contemplated undertakings—the lamas having quite a high reputation as seers and fortune tellers—their life scarcely bears comparison with their reputation. In most cases greedy and avaricious, they extort money whenever and wherever there is opportunity, in this respect resembling the lower class of Roman Catholic priests. Every service required of them by the laity must be recompensed in money or its equivalent, and poor people are often put to grievous straits to meet the extortionate demands made upon them by their so-called spiritual guides and helpers.

Religion in its outward form plays a large part in Tibetan life, but, according to Rockhill, the performance of religious ceremonies is not so general as might be expected—a view, however, which is not widely supported. The most pleasing ceremony he noted among them was the evening prayer, observed by nearly every one in the

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larger villages and towns. "As night falls," he tells us, "lamps are lit on the altars of every Buddhist temple, and a short service is chanted, while lamas seated on the porch play a rather mournful hymn, on long copper horns and clarinets. This is the signal for the housewives to light bundles of aromatic juniper boughs in the ovens made for the purpose on the roofs of their homes, and as the fragrant smoke ascends to heaven they sing a song or litany in which the men of the house often join, the deep voice of the latter and the clear high notes of the former blending most agreeably with the distant music in the lamaseries. In the morning juniper boughs are again burnt ; there is no singing, but offerings—bowls of water, wine, milk, or butter lamps—are placed before the household. It is a universal custom among this people, before eating or drinking anything, to dip the forefinger of the right hand in it and scatter a little of the contents towards the four cardinal points, reciting a short prayer the while. This and the mumbling of the mani prayer (Ommanipemehum) or some special formula given them by a lama, are practically the only religious observances of the people."

A distinguished explorer has put on record that the hymns made a deep impression on him, while another traveller describes a characteristic of the national worship which he found in a little stone building high up among the mountains. Looking through the rails of the small wooden door he found the whole space occupied by a large prayer-wheel, which for ever was being turned round by the force of a stream. Over the door, in a ledge, was a packet of prayers, these being written on paper and wrapped up in cloth. On looking around for more curiosities, he found prayers and rags hanging from several of the bushes and trees ; on one particular fruit

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tree was the longest prayer of all, written on white cloth and tied by ropes to the branches.

That such a land and such a people are in sore need of the Gospel is obvious from what has already been said. Still in the darkness of a religion that knows nothing of the saving and uplifting power of Christianity, and that holds out no glimmer of hope to the soul after death, the Tibetans would doubtless give voice to the Macedonian cry to the Christian Church if they only knew something of what the light and the liberty of the Gospel would mean to them. But, not knowing, they continue in their darkness, encouraged by their priests in the belief that the hated foreigners, who would teach them other doctrines than those of their native religion, are bent on the subjugation of the country and the enslavement of its inhabitants. And thus, hermit-like, they wrap themselves up in their gloom, barring the door against those who would fain bring them a message of gladness, and jealously resisting every attempted encroachment on their carefully guarded territory.

From time to time efforts have been made to Christianise the people of Tibet, but these have never received official encouragement, for missions are not permitted. The most noteworthy attempt at evangelisation was that made in 1845 by two Roman Catholics, Fathers Gabet and Huc, who, after a difficult and dangerous journey occupying eighteen months, actually reached the capital city of Lhasa. There, however, they were arrested by Chinese officials and sent as prisoners to Canton. This failure did not exhaust the missionary zeal of the Romish Church, but after other priests had been persecuted and massacred the effort was given up as hopeless, and now they are compelled to content themselves with occupying only the confines of Tibet, where they work among the

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Chinese, and such Tibetans as are there found. Several stations in Little Tibet are occupied by the Moravians, where they are hopefully waiting for the opening of the Forbidden Land. Around the portals of the country also, other missionary societies are at work preparing for the day of opportunity as soon as ever it dawns. Missionaries have studied the Tibetan language, and already a Tibetan-English grammar, a Tibetan grammar, and a New Testament in Tibetan have all been published.

The Christian missionaries who are stationed along the borders of the country, watching and waiting and praying for the opening of the door so long and so stubbornly closed against them, wait not as those who have no hope, for the past decade has witnessed not a few revolutions in Asiatic lands, and while the outlook is still black, as far as Tibet is concerned, it may be that the dawn is nearer at hand than even the most optimistic amongst us dares to hope.

We live in an age of sudden changes and violent upheavals, and it may be that the Land of the Lamas will ere long turn its face to the light, and, shaking off the superstitions of the ages and the dominion of the priests, accept the living Gospel of Jesus Christ. And when that day comes, as come it must, Tibet's long night of sleep will be over and her real progress will have at last begun.

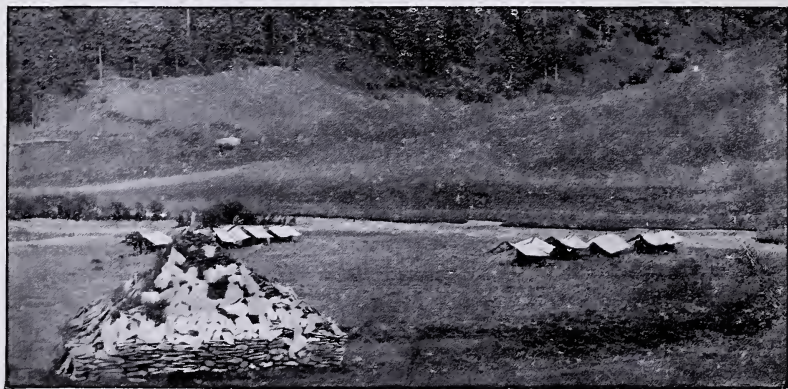
J. KENNEDY MACLEAN.



VIEW OF A CHARACTERISTIC TIBETAN HOUSE AT RANANG.



THE HOUSE OF A LOCAL CHIEF NEAR ANYA, EASTERN TIBET.



THE CAMP OF A COMPANY OF MERCHANTS IN EASTERN TIBET.

CHAPTER I

In a Tibetan Home

IT was early morning, and the little household was wrapped in slumber. Beneath their warm, sheep-skin gowns, Trashilhamo, a bright, playful girl of ten years, with her two brothers, Tsering ("Long Life") and Norbo ("Jewel") and the servants lay peacefully sleeping on the floor of the big kitchen, or living room, no sound breaking the stillness save the slow, steady breathing of the unconscious sleepers.

Suddenly from the adjoining room a loud voice was heard calling on Gezang ("Good Conduct") to rise up and feed the horses, and though the summons was meant only for the ears of the young man-servant it was vigorous enough to be heard by the other occupants of the house, and to wake them up from the enjoyment of their slumbers.

The voice was that of Dorje Semden ("True Hearted") the local chief of this beautiful highland valley of Bamehgong, lying about 12,000 feet above the level of the sea, and forming still the main entrance into Central Tibet. The nearest place of any importance is Batang—that well-known historic spot in East Tibet.

Hearing his master's call, Gezang, who was sleeping next to the large fireplace, built out from the wall near the centre of the room, rolled over from the shelter of his gown and blew up the smothered fire. Then, wriggling

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into his gown, he tied it round the waist with a long sash, and slowly drawing on his cloth boots, made them fast below the knees. Having thus completed his limited toilet, he buried a pine splinter in the burning argol, and as the fire blazed up it revealed the figure of the servant woman rising up from her resting place in the far corner to prepare the early tea.

With the pine torch in his hand, Gezang descended by the notched log of wood into the great, dark, floorless place beneath the kitchen reserved for yak, cows, mules, horses, goats and sheep, humming "Ommanipemehum" as he served out pease to the animals required for the day's journey.

Soon the servant girl had a fire blazing under the big iron pot mounted on a tripod. Smoke from the burning logs filled the room, but no one seemed to suffer any discomfort, familiarity with such conditions having accustomed the members of the household to regard with unconcern such a trifle as a stifling atmosphere.

The maid, named after the goddess Drölma, quietly proceeded with her duties, singing "Ommanipemehum" in a low, soft voice. The crackling of the fire, the pouring of water and the other movements associated with the morning's activities all tended to hinder sleep, but Trashilhamo, generally among the first to leave bed, still lay covered up on her wool, her little mind busy with the problem of her brother Tsering, and her heart heavy at the prospect of separation from him.

Tsering himself was blissfully unconscious of anxiety he had fallen off to sleep again, and lay sweetly oblivious of his immediate future.

Presently a low sing-song was heard. It was the chief repeating a long prayer, as was his wont before starting on a journey, or when anything unusual was expected.

In a Tibetan Home

No other sound was heard, indicating that he must have been repeating the words on his bed—a practice not at all uncommon, for a true lamaist is not supposed to lie awake without “saying” prayers. Some will even rise and go through a whole ritual in the middle of the night.

Her waking dreams at last over, Trashilhamo rose and dressed in a hurry, and before she was quite ready her mother came on the scene, muttering “Ommanipemehum”—not a usual thing with her.

She stopped and looked down on her sleeping boys, but said nothing. The “pönbo,” or chief, was the next to appear, dressed in a red “nambu” (woollen) gown. He was busy getting the juniper and incense ready for the morning oblation, while incessantly repeating one of the common prayers, now in a mild, pleading tone, now in a loud, almost fierce, voice, which died down abruptly to a rapid whisper.

The sun was tingeing the higher mountain tops by the time Dorje ascended the notched log leading up to the flat mud-roof. At the one corner was a little altar, or oven, where he set fire to the juniper and sprinkled incense on it. As the smoke and prayers floated away on the cold, pure air, he put the big sea-shell to his mouth and produced a few long, weird sounds. At sunrise the same long, solemn sounds may be heard from the various house tops all through the valley.

This morning the chief took the lead, as he was anxious to invoke supreme blessing upon what he was about to do—the offering up of his promising young son Tsering to God (as he thought), like Abraham of old, that he might serve Him in the sacred office of a lama or monk.

It was a personal act of obedience, and yet, was he not severing dear little Tsering for life from home and from

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all he had learned to love there ; cutting, wrongly cutting, the tenderest ties of human relationship ?

Poor, misguided Dorje ! he was acting, according to his belief, for the good of the boy and the family ; indeed, it was a matter of duty with him, yet, in spite of all, it was tugging at the heart-roots of the big man, standing 6ft. 2in. in height, as he emptied his lungs into the shell and sent out across the valley the piercing sounds of his morning exercise.

The little fellow himself, who was about to enter upon a new life, was as yet scarcely conscious of what the immediate future was to bring to him. He had always seen the lamas treated with marked respect and veneration. They appeared to get the best of everything. Tsering and his little brother Norbo had often fancied becoming priests ; and in their childish games had frequently played the role. But somehow, this morning, as he witnessed the preparations going on around him, the prospect of becoming a priest in earnest lost its fascinating charm. His outlook had suddenly become overclouded. He even found it difficult to get the "dsamba" paste down as he sat at breakfast. It seemed so dry, though his mother buttered his tea well, and urged him to drink the one cupful after the other.

Drölma brought in a big leather bag full of "dsamba" (roasted barley meal) for Tsering to use in the lamasery at Batang. Pålma, Tsering's mother, also followed with a large "brick" of tea, a sheep-stomach full of butter, and a string of cheese. (Cheese is formed into small squares and hung up to dry like beads on a string, till it gets quite hard.) It only then dawned upon Tsering that he was to be away from home for a long time, and he felt anything but happy in the thought.

Trashilhamo scarcely ate anything, only kept on

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sipping her tea, looking at Tsering with her big, black eyes, full of pity and sorrow. This did not help her little brother, whose breath became more and more laboured, till he suddenly ran down to Gezang to prevent an involuntary confession.

When a tiny mite, Trashi had carried him up and down the dangerous steps, and for a few years they had played at all sorts of things together, happy in the innocent pleasures of childhood. As she watched him now with the keen eyes of love, she noticed how he bravely fought with himself, and as she saw his struggle, it touched her to the quick. She would have liked to follow his example and leave, but remained where she was.

The mother (named after the goddess Pálma, the illustrious), has scarcely been noticed here, and yet she was the prime mover in this whole affair. She it was who had coaxed the pønbo, and finally got him to find a priest in the great lamasery of Batang to act as her son's teacher and guardian during his apprenticeship.

Some people are clever at hiding their feelings under the ordinary circumstances of life, but there are crises when the veil drops and the real person stands revealed. This crisis had now come to Pálma, and she almost wished that she had allowed Dorje to have his way, for the parting was harder than she had imagined. The boy was at last ready to start, dressed in his "Sunday best"—a red "nampu" gown, many-coloured boots, and cap, with charmbox (kawu) of silver hanging on his breast. To Pálma's eyes of love he looked too small to be separated from home, and a great pity surged up in her breast. She tried to cheer him as best she could, promising to go and see him very soon.

As Tsering was climbing on to the big white mare, held by Gezang and partially loaded with provisions, little

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Norbo (the Jewel) burst out into crying. This loosened the fountain of tears all round. Trashilhamo sobbed against her dirty woollen sleeve, while Tsering, riding out of the big court-yard behind his father, allowed the tears to flow freely. They did not cease till the little company got down into the lovely pine forest, growing on either side of the little river, which drains and waters this beautiful highland valley.

The mother stood on the roof looking after the quickly vanishing party, and as she turned to descend the ladder her eyes were dim with tears. Standing close by, Drölma heard her muttering the word “nyingje” (an expression of loving sympathy and pity). That was all she said, and even that was only spoken to herself.

And why “nyingje”? Was not this the consummation of all her hopes, the answer to her oft-repeated prayer:—

“Grant me grace to fulfil the requirements of Religion!
Grant me masculine posterity!”

It merely revealed the mother side of the strong woman. By the time the cows were milked she had triumphed over her weaker self, and even congratulated herself on having a son, who before long would be a holy priest, able to stand between her and God, her failures and God’s law, putting all right, generally, for herself and family. In her mind she already saw him wielding the ecclesiastic sceptre; interceding on behalf of “all animated beings.”

Not only was Tsering insured against hell by donning the priestly garb, but he would himself form a part of “God militant”—the Church, which is His body, or “Gendun”—merely “lingering in this world for the good of mankind.”

The journey on which the lad had set out had much to



BATANG, - A TOWN IN EASTERN TIBET NOW OCCUPIED BY PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES.

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engage his attention. He was interested in what he saw of the fine country north of his home, and the various farm houses they passed on the way. After crossing the easy pass about ten miles from Bameh, they descended the lovely ravine, covered with rhododendrons of various hue, to the Yangtze, or "River of Golden Sand," where they put up for the night in the village of Trubanang (ferriers' home).

From here they travelled over level ground, mostly along the left bank of the river, to the Batang Monastery, built on the left bank of a Yangtze river tributary. Here the chief entered, reverentially, with his hat in his hand and the long plaits of hair down his bended back, the tongue partly protruding.

Tsering was handed over to his teacher, who put him through the "initiation"—shaving off all his hair, but a little tuft on the crown, which would be cut off at his ordination as "Traba" (monk). When that rite was performed, his separation from the outside world would be complete.

Thus Tsering was left—a prisoner inside the great lamasery, surrounded by a high wall and groves of fine oaks, poplars, and ash.

As regards usefulness, he was lost to the world, like so many hundred thousands of the best of the Tibetan nation; yea, worse, he became from that day a burden to his country, and, by degrees, a curse to the community.

CHAPTER II

The Training of a Lama

ABOUT a week later, the moon was lighting up the red and yellow walls of the big halls and cells of the monastery. Tsering was sitting on the flat mud roof of his cell, learning the Tibetan alphabet. For some days he had been taken up with the novelty of the place, with the things which he heard and saw; but the strict discipline imposed on novices, together with the hard work and even harder study, had already curbed his spirits and reduced him to a condition of absolute obedience. But the novelty was already wearing off, and his thoughts were with his loved ones at home. He was homesick, and wept as he kept on repeating in monotonous tones, “ka, k’a, ga, nga” (a, b, c, d). The weeping irritated his teacher, who came up and gave him a good twist of the ear.

“Kang la ngu gi yø?” (“Why do you weep?”) he demanded, in a bitter voice. “Nga lab tub gi mari” (“I cannot learn”). “Nga nang la dro gi yin” (“I will go home”). “Traba che gi men” (“I won’t be a priest”), Tsering sobbed out. It was a relief to him thus to give expression to his feelings, as he had been wanting to do so for the last two days. The loneliness and isolation were hard to bear, and he was longing for companionship. Besides, he had been listening to the voices of the children at play in the lay town of Batang in the centre of the plain, about a mile away, and that joyous sound had reminded him of his own lost youth and happiness.



A CLOSER VIEW OF BATANG AND ITS OVERSHADOWING MOUNTAIN.

The Training of a Lama

Looking south, he saw the road by which he had come with his father, and he believed he could find the way back to Trashilhamo, Ama (mother), and Norbo. Here there were no mothers, no sisters; only men, men and boys whom he did not know, and who seemed to have little sympathy with him in the bitterness of his loneliness and sorrow.

“Stop that talk! You will have to learn eight letters before you come down to-night,” said the priest, and left him.

The teacher was not an unkind man, but he had been to Trashilunpo (monastery in Central Tibet), and believed in discipline, *i.e.*, for subordinates.

In another week Tsering ceased his repinings and submitted to the inevitable, and after the lapse of six months he was presented before the “Kenbo” for entrance examination. Much to the pride of his teacher, Tsering passed with much honour. So creditable, indeed, was the impression which he created, that the Abbot took the teacher into his own room and gave special instructions regarding the lad.

His ordination, or reception into “holy orders,” was simple, but definite. It consisted in the literal recitation of selections of holy writ. Then followed a few pointed questions, such as :—

“Are you the posterity of butchers?”

“Are you the posterity of black-smiths?”

(The only castes in Tibet regarded outside the ordinary pale of society.)

“Are you guilty of parental murder?”

To each of these questions Tsering answered cheerfully “ma yin” (“no”), as taught by his teacher.

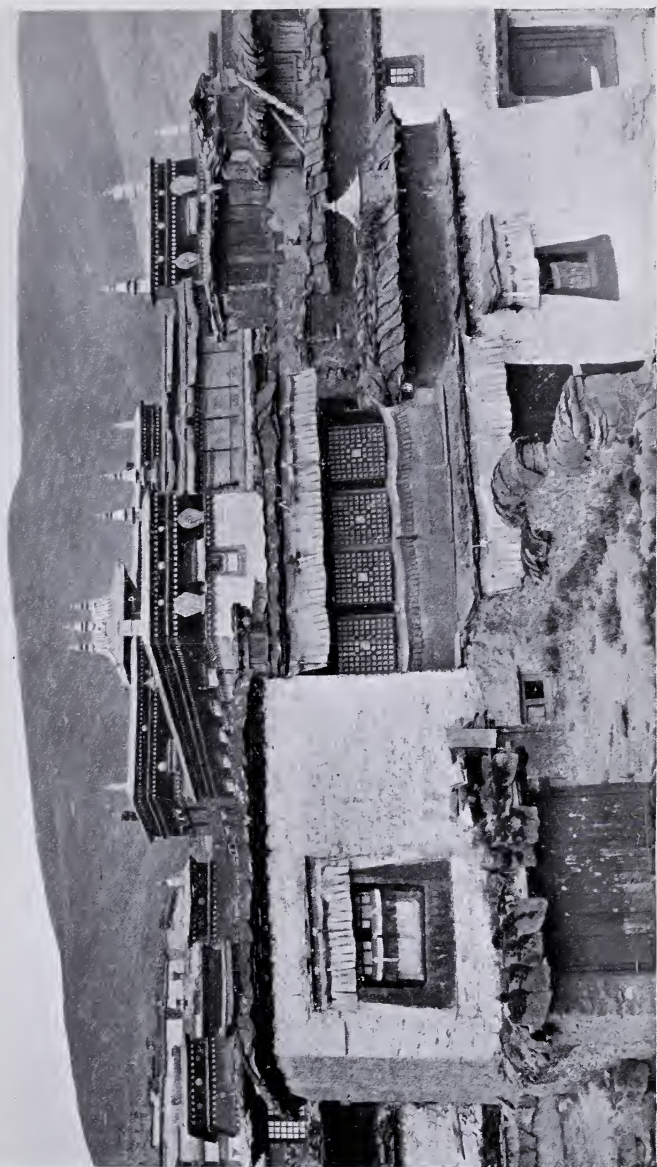
Then the remaining tuft of hair was cut, and the

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Abbot gave him a religious name, Ngawang (Magic Power), by which he was henceforth to be known. He was then divested of his ordinary clothing and arrayed in the distinctive dress of a traba. The conversion was now complete, and strangely effective. He might now attend the meetings of the clergy in the big halls, and be recognised as a traba, but there were still many examinations and ordeals to go through before he reached the distinctive attainments of a lama.

Ngawang, however, advanced rapidly in monastic learning, and was finally sent to Trashilunpo, in Central Tibet, for further study.

But, in addition to his scholastic acquirements, the lad learned also a great many unmentionable things from the "holy" priests in Batang. Trashilhamo, being a woman, had opportunities of finding out, when later visiting Batang, how depraved a great many of the priests were, and it was this knowledge, together with other things, which, coming to her ears, so greatly influenced her in later life.



PORTION OF LITANG MONASTERY, THE SMALL BUILDINGS BEING CELLS FOR PRIESTS.

CHAPTER III

Trashilhamo Preparing for Marriage

A CERTAIN young man from Ranang (the home of the goat), Norbo by name, had just left the chief's house at Bamehgong, together with some others, *en route* for Tsaka, that well-known salt district on the banks of the Mekong, some three or four days west of Bameh.

He was about twenty-three years of age and the only son of the Ranang chief, or headman. He was well dressed in brown "gonam," with a silk turban wound round his head. The hair, according to the custom of his people, was coiled round his head in two massive plaits in such a way as to display the silver and jade rings with which they were ornamented. Part of his hair was cut so as to form a low fringe on his forehead. He had a string of splendid "Kawus" (charmboxes) of silver, set with corals, fastened over his left shoulder. And the ever-present long sword, sheathed in silver, was likewise studded with a row of precious stones.

Like most men of East Tibet he stood six feet in his many-coloured boots of cloth and skin. On his way back from the salt district he only halted briefly for tiffin, and then continued his journey to Batang, and from there to Ranang, about fifty miles west of Litang.

Strange to say, by arrangement between the Bameh

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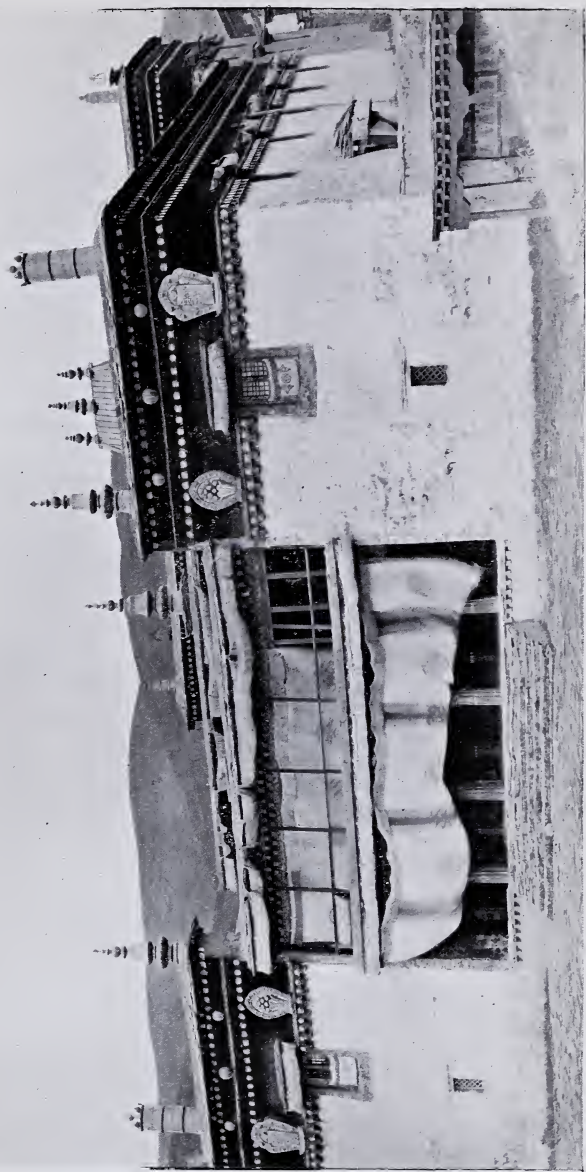
and Ranang chiefs, or their wives, Trashilhamo and this man were engaged to be married one lucky day, and that before very long, and this without either initiative or consent from the parties most concerned. Neither of them took offence or objected to this arrangement, since this was the only proper way to become engaged and married. Deep down in her heart—for even Tibetans have such an organ, as this story will prove—Trashilhamo fancied another man nearer home, and even ventured to say so to her mother one day, when spoken to about the approaching marriage.

Months passed, and Trashi was still at Bamehgong, milking the yak and cows, shearing the sheep, hoeing the fields, or beating the clods to pieces with a long-handled mallet.

The ploughing was generally done by the men and pairs of yak. The plough itself was a most primitive implement, constructed of wood and slightly tipped with iron.

In the autumn Trashi would be busy with the rest, harvesting the barley, wheat, turnips and pease, practically the only produce that will grow at this altitude, under present management. The harvesting is generally accompanied by much mirth and fun. The Tibetans, by no means a dull sort of people at any time, are especially cheerful at the harvest season, when numbers of them are brought together in the work of the fields. Men and women bring home great burdens of barley or pease, and climb up to the flat roof of a two or three-storeyed house by means of the most dangerous steps.

The thrashing is performed on the roof, women generally doing this work by means of a stick tied to a long handle, and as they engage in the operation they keep time to a special harvest song, or a tune set to the formula "Ommanipemehum."



A LARGE TEMPLE IN THE LITANG MONASTERY.

The large entrance to this temple, it will be observed, is screened; the spires seen in the picture are gilt.

Trashilhamo Preparing for Marriage

As the Tibetan women have sweet voices, this performance is perhaps the most interesting to an outsider, and it may be heard in all parts of the country in which farm-houses are situated. In the dry corn fields groups of men and women may be seen squatting round a churn of beer or tea—and Tibetan women enjoy their tea just as much as English ladies do, if it is buttered and seasoned to their taste.

While beer drinking is a habit all over the country, it is more of a vice in Central than East Tibet. The really ruinous drink in Tibet is not "chiang" (a mild beer), but "ara" (brandy), which is often imported from China. It is too dear for common use, happily, or Tibet would be a worse country than it is to-day. Even the women have their special beer parties. Seating themselves in a ring on the ground, with churns of beer or Chiang in the centre, they will remain thus for hours, drinking and singing. Sometimes they will get up and dance round the beer, holding one another's hands, like children round a Christmas tree, singing all the time.

Trashilhamo had just turned twenty, when, one chilly afternoon in February, a messenger came from Ranang, bringing the "noorin" (mother's "milk price"), as they call the presents given in "gratitude" for a daughter "wooded and won."

The nature of the present is quite optional, ranging from a few rupees to a small fortune, according to circumstances. The bridegroom's parents give to the bride's family, while the girl's parents provide their daughter's dowry. Customs, of course, vary in different parts of the country.

In this case the noorin consisted of a handsome pony, some pieces of "gonam" and silk, and about 200 rupees for the parents, while Trashi received several pieces of

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silk and cloth, and a few ornaments. These last, being made for the Litang district, were the cause of a good deal of amusement. Trashy fastened the two ornaments to her friend's hair, and the kitchen rang with their merry laughter. Even the Pönbo had to join in, but then suddenly he began to explain the use of the various ornaments, partly in apology, adding that they were generally worn in the Litang Province.

The silver discs or plates for the hair—no fewer than three in number—caused fresh bursts of laughter, as they found them so difficult to disentangle from the hair. Trashy and her mother then admired the corals and jade with which they were set, much to the messenger's pleasure, who was sitting cross-legged on the floor, sipping his nicely buttered and seasoned tea.

Trashy knew how to make good tea. An ornamental wooden bowl, only used for special occasions, was placed before the messenger and his companion, full of the finest dsamba, together with a plateful of butter and a cake of sour cheese.

Trashy urged them to eat well, and Drölma kept on replenishing their wooden tea cups from the bright brass tea pot, brought out for this special occasion. Under ordinary circumstances an earthenware tea pot, ornamented with small pieces of china, is used, each person at the meal helping himself or herself from it. No wonder the elderly messenger dressed in sheep skin, trimmed with red shagreen, jovially stroked the few long hairs on his upper lip, and then with an air of importance produced from the bosom of his gown a letter from his chief, carefully wrapped in a silken "kata"—white salutation scarf—and with a low bow presented it to the Pönbo with both hands, saying, as he did so, "Kuzug tsen gye" ("long life and honour to you!")

Trashilhamo Preparing for Marriage

“Katas” had also been presented with the presents, but not with so much grace and confidence.

The Pönbo read the letter aloud. It was from the Ranang chief, and though very politely styled, was quite intelligible to Trashi, who sobered down at the sentence, “The 18th of the third moon is an auspicious day, and with your favour we will send for the bride, Trashilhamo (Glorious goddess) on that day.”

“Only about two months left then,” said mother and daughter at the same time, thinking of all the work before them, in preparation for the great event.

Dorje Semden wrote a reply in the affirmative, and the messenger left the next morning with many bows and smiles, well pleased at the happy result of his mission.

The morning of the 28th of the second moon was a little wet. Trashi, Gezang, and a little servant girl, had gone off early that morning for the winter pastures—about one and a half days’ journey towards the south-east.

“I suppose there will be snow on the pass to-day,” said the Pönbo, as he stood watching the trio wending their way up by the stream towards the pass, leading a yak behind them.

“They won’t mind the snow,” answered his wife, “but it will be bad for the eyes if the sun comes out. The Chinese who came past here yesterday were nearly all blinded by the snow, but then they are not used to it as we are. What do they come for, anyhow?” she asked, with a touch of impatience in her tone, though she had treated them kindly enough when they passed a night under her roof and had received no thanks for it.

“They are going into Central Tibet, by orders from the Emperor; but it would be better for them to stay at home,” said the chief, and coolly added, “They will likely die on the road.”

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"Poor creatures ! It is hard on them and hard on the 'misser' (the people), who must supply them with the 'oola' " * Pálma reflected.

"It is wicked and cruel," said the chief, with a good deal of feeling. "It is half a month since a lot of our people went with the Nepaulese (embassy), taking fifty horses and yak with them, and they are not back yet. The Amban is soon coming, and then fifty or sixty will have to go with him all the way to Traya. They will be away a month. Nyam chung la kale kagpo re" ("rather hard on the poor"), he added sympathetically.

"I heard that Aggutsering's horse broke down on the road, just over the Tashø pass, and that he had to hire one at a rupee a day. How can he pay that ? He had only the one horse, and could scarcely feed that." "Akka ! akka !" rejoined the wise woman. "I saw Treshiang (Aggutsering's wife) yesterday, and she said that Aggu had taken two skins of butter with him to sell in Batang, in order to pay that priest the interest due on the money borrowed last year. He could not pay him at the New Year, and the man threatened to take from him the only field worth having."

"I will talk with him," said the chief ; "he is really not a bad man, but he seems to have money standing out all over."

"Yes, and getting rich on it," she added.

"He took that fine mule from Tsao in Batang. It was worth 100 rupees, at least."

Trashī and her party were by this time nearing the top of the pass, stamping barefoot through the snow so as not to soil their boots, which were tucked in under the sash behind. The young servant girl and Trashī were now and again playfully pelting one another with snow-

* "Qola," forced labour in lieu of taxes.

Trashilhamo Preparing for Marriage

balls, while Gezung, less given to frivolity, was muttering some well-known prayer as he led the yak in front over the difficult path. The sing-song did not cease, though now and again a ball would strike his thick skin gown. To bring him back to life, Trashi, for once, cast a big ball on his fur cap. This had the desired effect. He looked back with a revengeful smile. Trashi tried to run, but he had hold of her grey woollen gown before she had time to escape, and enveloped her neck in snow. With a cool smile, he again caught hold of the yak, while her companion helped Trashi to brush the snow from her face and neck.

Again the sing-song commenced, and the trio ascended without further pranks to the summit of the pass, marked by a pile of stones, to which Gezung and the girls each added a stone, saying as they did so, "Chøsheh" ("accept the offering"), and then glided over the cold, windy pass towards the wooded valley far below. No sooner had they passed the summit, than the scenery, the climate, and even Gezung's prayer changed.

From this lofty pass there lay before the travellers a panoramic view of the endless mass of mountains to the east, and the snowy ranges in the west. Looking south, the mountains appeared darker and enveloped in a blue haze.

Reaching a camp of black-tent nomads at the upper end of the valley, they spent the night there. The tent (entirely made of yak hair) resembled an Arab's dwelling place, or a huge spider with legs of yak hair ropes extending in all directions. The two sides of the tent were loosely laced together at the top, so as to allow an exit for smoke.

Trashi was well acquainted with the inmates, who received her and her companions with apparent pleasure. Soon the travellers were comfortably seated on skins

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spread on the ground, and in a very few minutes the wife of the tent had churned the tea, and, with a broad smile on her greased and wrinkled face, poured the tempting liquid into wooden cups with a brass ladle. Trashy was immediately at home with the three plump, round-faced daughters of the homely-looking nomad, and made herself generally useful, helping them to carry water in big churns or bamboos, balanced on the small of the back by means of a rope over the chest.

She also assisted them to get the cows, sheep and yak into the large enclosure by the tent. The little lambs were carried right into the tent after getting their drink of milk from their respective mothers, who, being members of the Asiatic Cow League, absolutely refused to give any milk till these rightful owners had first received their portion.

Then the short twilight was gone, and all found shelter beneath the black fabric, lit up and smoked by a pine fire suspended on an iron grate.

Wolves were heard on the mountain side in the evening. So the nomad took down his loaded musket and cautiously lighted the cotton tape or fuse, and discharged the long, forked gun a few steps from the tent.

The next morning the travellers were courteously offered milk. This was politely refused, as Tibetans seldom drink fresh milk, but save it for churning. They were then pressed to take "shio" (curdled milk), and this they gratefully accepted.

Trashy insisted on the "Nemo" (hostess) accepting a few handfuls of tea leaves, and then with a "kali shu" took her departure, the little group at the tent door smilingly responding in chorus: "Kali pe, ah!" ("proceed carefully").



A TYPICAL TIBETAN HEADMAN'S HOUSE AT BATANG.



CHAPTER IV

In the Hands of a Robber Band

IT was about two in the afternoon; the noon-day halt was over. The little party was getting near the open, partly-wooded valley, where Norbo and the others were awaiting the visitors in the big, commodious tent.

The sun was warm, and Gezang had divested himself of the upper half of his gown and tied the sleeves round his waist.

Trashhi also had taken her left arm out of the warm woollen gown, and her new, unwashed calico "onju," with its tight-fitting collar, was seen to advantage.

Gezang was carolling some shepherd's air at the top of his voice when, suddenly, from the north end of the valley (their left) four curious-looking riders, with five horses, came upon them.

Gezang threw on his gown as if expecting something. The men dismounted, and, without any warning, two of them seized hold of Trashilhamo, and, covering up her mouth, were in the act of lifting her on to the spare horse, when Gezang drew his sword and attacking the intruders nearly cut off the left arm of the bolder of the men. Thus assailed, they turned to defend themselves, and in so doing allowed Trashhi to fall heavily to the ground. In an instant the other two men joined their companions, and it would undoubtedly have fared badly with Gezang

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had he not sought safety in hasty flight. Putty, Trashi's travelling companion, was far enough behind to witness the sudden attack, and understanding its meaning, speedily made her escape, yelling as she ran.

Looking back, after a bullet had whizzed harmlessly past his head, Gezang saw Trashi in the hands of the robbers, who were tying her to the saddle, or rather, her feet were fastened together under the horse's stomach, and the animal whipped off after another horse already started. He called after her in Tibetan: "Nga yong gi yin" ("I am coming"), and then ran for the pasture land, not far distant.

Trashi's hands were tied behind, and she could neither move nor call out. She would have been dashed to pieces under the horses had she not been used to riding. Looking behind, she saw only the dear, black and white yak, standing as he had been left by the trio, looking wistfully in her direction.

With one man in front and three behind, she was hurried through the forest and down rough roads leading through steep ravines and past dangerous cliffs. No halt was made till near midnight, when they reached the right bank of the "River of Golden Sand." Here the company dismounted, after exchanging some words in a language which Trashi could not understand, though she knew it was not Chinese, in spite of the fact that her captors were dressed like Szchwan traders.

Half dead with fright and torture, she was suffering greatly from the effects of the long ride. "What would her captors do with her now?" she wondered.

After some consultation, they untied her feet and lifted her down from the horse. As she tried to stand she fell on the sand. Her hands were still tied behind, and with one cloth in her mouth and another over it, she



A CHINESE BRIDEGROOM AND HIS TIBETAN BRIDE.

In the Hands of a Robber Band

experienced the peculiar sensation of choking. Then she became sick and weak. A tall, thin man bent over her, and, after telling her in Chinese, with many gestures, to keep quiet, he slowly uncovered her mouth, pouring in some Chinese wine. This duty performed, he replaced the gag, but happily with only the cloth over her mouth.

Though slightly invigorated by the wine, Trashi felt faint and miserable. The heat was simply suffocating; and she twisted her painful hands, all the time whispering "Ommanipemehum"—the only "prayer" with which she was acquainted, though quite ignorant of its meaning.

After a time she sat up on the sand and watched the three men feeding the animals and attending to their wounded companion, who was crying out so loudly in his pain that a piece of clothing was thrown over his head so as to deaden the groans. Then they made a careful search of her person in the hope of finding valuables, but in this they were disappointed. This done, they pointed significantly to the sword, and with violent gestures, accompanied by broken Chinese, commanded the poor captive to keep quiet.

Then, in a little while, as one man held on to the rope with which they had loosely tied her feet, another fed her with buck-wheat cakes, and water from the river. The half-moon shone over the Eastern mountains, and faintly lit up the broad river gliding noiselessly past in a southerly direction. The faint murmur of a rapid farther down was the only sound that broke the stillness of the night. A little higher up the mountain side ran the main road to Kontseraba, a populous district in the Yangtze basin, east of Atentze. Once or twice, as some movement beyond the camp was wafted to the ears of the listening robbers, they sprang hastily to their feet, grasping the

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rifles, which were always kept loaded and ready for immediate use.

The youngest man was sent up the river bank and disappeared, and in his absence the other two became very busy ministering to their wounded companion. Cutting his long hair loose, they twisted it into a horn on his forehead, and as this operation was in progress, the knowledge as to the identity of her captors suddenly dawned upon the young and helpless maid.

She had often heard of Lolos (or Nosus) and of their daring robberies and murders. She recollected, moreover, that they were distinguished by having their hair done up in the shape of a horn, and by being dressed in long felt capes gathered in at the neck. Tibetan robbers are never guilty of the theft of human beings, but the practice is followed by the Lolos. This was well known to Trashi, and the hope of being released when her captors should find that she possessed nothing of value, which had up till now sustained her through her trials, vanished, leaving her in a state of misery and horror worse than anything yet experienced.

"Könchog sum" ("Most precious Trinity"), she exclaimed, as her most pitiable condition flashed across her mental vision, and again falling helpless on the sand, the tears, for the first time, rolled down her cheeks.

Just then a great black object was seen moving along the river bank. "Can it be my own people," she thought, as she strained her eyes to see who or what it might be. Suddenly the mysterious object seemed to fall to the ground, leaving Trashi with her eyes fixed on the spot where it had disappeared, and vaguely wondering what its relation to herself might be.

She was not long left in suspense, for her feet were again bound as tightly as before, and then by two men

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she was carried down to the water side, where the black object proved to be a coracle, or big tub, made of prepared hide. The youngest of the robbers had been away stealing this floating shell, and he was now standing in it ready to receive his charge.

Fearing the fate that might be awaiting her, Trashi raised a vigorous protest, but her appeal fell on deaf ears. Her captors had evidently made up their mind regarding the treatment of their prisoner, and nothing that she could say or do would have the least effect in altering their resolution. So into the tiny coracle they hastily bundled their helpless victim, and then pushing the "boat" with its two passengers from the bank, watched it for a moment or two as it tossed about on the waters of the river.

"Nga yong gi yin" had so far sustained the brave captive; she had hoped till the last that a band of her own people would come to her rescue, but now floating down the dangerous river in a frail shell she said to herself in deepest agony, "yong gi men! yong gi men!" ("He won't come") in spite of the persistent "Nga yong gi yin," which was still lingering in her ear.

The vision of the lonely yak and Gezang running off to the tent was entirely obliterated from Trashi's mind by her present heart-rending circumstances. The light skiff was heaving, tipping and dancing dangerously as it neared the murmuring rapid, and every minute Trashi expected to find herself precipitated into the water.

Whether from ignorance or of set purpose she did not know, but the man with the two-bladed oar was standing, instead of sitting on his knees, as he manœuvred the difficult craft. Probably it was in order to better see the stones and rocks which were imperilling their progress and obstructing the mighty river. Leaping from billow

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to billow, they appeared to be successfully negotiating the dangerous rapid when a violent side movement tipped the man into the river, and all but capsized the coracle. Tied hand and foot as she was, the girl could do nothing to prevent the tragedy. Without a sound the unfortunate man disappeared in the powerful current, leaving the other occupant of the slim craft at the mercy of the tossing waves.

Glad to be relieved of the company of her river companion, Trashi applied herself to the task of bursting her bonds. After some exertion, she was able to free her mouth of its bandage, but could get neither her hands nor her feet from their fetters. But she used her tongue freely, calling out to both sides of the river for help whenever she came within sight of houses, and loudly and rapidly saying "Ommanipemehum" at other times—all, however, to no purpose.

What was the use of the "sunga" (amulet) suspended by a lace round her neck? What could Tsering (Ngawang) be doing at the lamasery when he was unable to foresee and prevent such a calamity as that which had befallen her?

Again she would call out in the agony of her fear and despair, but the people whom she saw from her floating prison only gazed absently at the canoe floating past in mid-river, allowing it to continue its course without making the slightest effort to stay its progress.

The river became broader and broader, while the heat of the burning sun grew more and more unbearable. Utterly fatigued, the helpless girl at last closed her eyes, and fell asleep in the gently-rocking cradle, forgetting in blissful slumber her forlorn condition and the perils with which she was surrounded.

When Trashi awoke the next morning, she found

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herself an object of attention on the part of a great crowd of men and boys, who were loudly talking in a language that sounded to her like Chinese. Where could she be? She sat up to view her surroundings, hoping to find some solution of the perplexing enigma, but in sheer weakness she lay down once more, wondering all the time where she was and what had happened to her.

After a little while two elderly men approached and spoke to her, but she did not quite understand what was said. "Mantse," they remarked. She was acquainted with this word, which means barbarian, well enough, for the Chinese who had been entertained in her own home used it quite freely in speaking of Tibetans and any of the conquered nations and tribes under China.

Pulling the coracle ashore, the strangers lifted Trashi out and untied her hands and feet. Then as she was unable to stand without assistance, they led her up to the old temple in Shiku (Shøggü), where a straw mat was spread for her on the ground. Some merit-seekers, seeing her need of food, brought a quantity of dry rice and a cup of water, and placing these before her, left her to partake at leisure of the scanty meal.

To interrupt the narrative for a moment, it may be explained that here at Shiku the Yangtze makes a great bend towards the north—the extent of which was only discovered some ten years ago by M. Bonin and the writer—and is divided by a sandy island at this particular point. The coracle had taken the western channel, skirting Shiku, and had been temporarily lodged in the backwater. Thus Trashi "happened" to land in Shiku and to be left in the old temple of this warm little town.

Had the perplexed girl been left to herself, she might have found her lot endurable for the time being. But

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crowds of rude boys and curious spectators, for which China has a notorious reputation, gave her no rest till darkness drove them away, when, by way of a change, the local beggars, some of them awful creatures to look upon, came to share her quarters. The dogs, too, came lurking around to lick up any grains of rice that might have been left.

Trashy had no idea as to where she was, and feeling weak and ill, looked forward to certain death, as most Tibetans do who are taken ill outside of their own land. "Nga yong gi yin" had long ago ceased to be any comfort to her.

It was a long and painful night through which she passed. During the cool hours of early morning, sleep brought her fevered brain a little rest, which was broken at dawn by the beggars lighting their opium pipes and loudly talking all the time of the coming market that day.

Among the many strangers in the town was a Tibetan horse dealer, on his way to the Talifu fair, who had pitched his tent in the Shiku valley. It was not long before he heard that a "manja" woman was lying ill in the temple. Determined to investigate the strange case, he set out for the temple, under the guidance of four Chinese boys, and soon found himself in Trashy's presence as she lay, dejected and hopeless, on her mat.

"Ya!" he exclaimed in a tone of surprise as soon as he saw the unhappy girl, this exclamation meaning: "What are you, a Tibetan, doing here, alone in this strange place?"

"Kutseringye!" answered Trashy in a relieved, pleading tone, the phrase meaning "long life to you," but is equivalent to "God bless you," and is an expression used by inferiors for benefits received (or sought). Seldom, if



BATANG COUNTRY TYPES IN SHEEP-SKIN CLOTHING.



A TYPICAL GROUP OF BATANG CHILDREN.

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ever, had "The glorious goddess" used it in its proper sense before, but now it proved most effective. The rough man's heart was not only touched, but captivated by the helpless girl in her pathetic condition. A few hasty sentences as to their respective homes were exchanged, and then the big sunburnt Tibetan bent down to help Trashi on to her feet, displaying a mother's tenderness in every movement.

Supporting her by his strong arm, they proceeded across the market place and through the narrow streets lined with people, some of whom were laughing, others commenting, many applauding, and all curious.

A crowd followed to the camping ground, where they were effectively checked by the sight of two huge mastiffs standing on guard and tugging viciously at their chains. The homely spectacle of the dogs, the tent, the horses leisurely grazing near by, a little boy, two women, and two more men, revived Trashi's drooping spirit, and she smiled through her tears as she was courteously offered the best cushion in the tent, among a heap of saddles, felts, and other articles.

One of the women was old and wrinkled; the other, the mother of the little fellow in sheep skin, was perhaps only a few years older than Trashi. Both were alike dirty, and were obviously nomads who had lived in tents all their life.

The important-looking man was a nomadic priest and doctor combined, while the third was the hired servant of the man who had gone to the rescue of Trashi—the younger woman's husband, and owner of the ponies and musk brought for sale.

Trashi was soon initiated into all these relationships, and almost as soon became a member of the household. To the Chinese onlookers she appeared to have made but

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a poor exchange from the cool temple into the hot tent ("from the frying-pan into the fire"), but, of course, they saw things through Chinese eyes!

The people into whose company Trashi had thus been introduced came from Mankam, from six to eight days' travelling west from Bamehgong. The sound of their voices, together with the chat of the little, rosy fellow, was music to the ears of the forlorn girl, while their homely, pleasant manners, so unmistakably Tibetan, acted like a charm upon her.

The brass pot, poised just outside the tent, was full of boiling water, into which the young wife threw a handful of Tibetan tea and a pinch of soda. The tea leaves were allowed to boil properly, and the liquid was then poured into the churn through a bamboo sieve. A good lump of rancid butter was taken out of the sheep stomach, in which it had been brought from the homeland, and thoroughly churned into the tea, along with a little salt. A hot stone was also dropped into the tea in order to get the best out of the precious herb.

This exhilarating extract was greatly enjoyed, together with dsamba, real dsamba from Tibet. The repast over, the clerical member of the household made a careful examination of their guest, and announcing that she had fever, bade her lie down, which advice she was only too glad to follow in her condition of extreme weakness.

A chat with the women revealed to Trashi the sad fact that she was about a month's journey from Bamehgong. They urged her to accompany them to Talifu, and then return with them as soon as the horses, musk, and "tsong-tsao" were sold.

This she gratefully decided to do, and the next day found the party proceeding southwards, first up a wooded pass and then on to a beautiful, open valley, where they

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halted for their midday meal beside a smiling lake. From this spot they journeyed on through the glorious "Mingja" country—possibly the finest valley in China—and, four days later, camped by the old pagodas outside the city of Talifu.

CHAPTER V

Saved by Missionaries

“**I** HAVE been out to see the Tibetans,” said the Missionary to his wife as they and the children sat down to five o’clock tea. “There is a young woman lying ill in one of the tents,” he continued. “Such a nice little woman. She has fever, and I asked the men to come to the ‘Yesutang’ for medicine. They bowed politely, and said, ‘lasso, lasso,’ but they looked rather suspicious and frightened, more so than the woman herself, who readily let me see her tongue and feel her pulse. I cannot forget her look as she lay down again on the felts in that hot tent. My!” he added, with much fervour, “It is enough to give any one fever—the heat in that tent and the food they live on.”

“If they don’t come, you had better go out to her with some medicine, John,” advised his wife.

“So I shall, my dear,” he replied, “but will it do her much good under those conditions? Moreover, there is a lama fellow there who might even dissuade her from taking the medicine.”

“We will pray about it, John,” she said, and the subject was dropped for the time being.

The following day the Missionary made his way along the busy streets, out through the north gate and across fields to the white tent by the pagodas. He had with him several doses of quinine, nicely packed in paper, and

Saved by Missionaries

a bottle of milk, but he became so shocked with what he saw that he remained without speaking for a few moments outside the tent, and then took the things home again. "The darkness and ignorance of these people," he said to himself after leaving the tent, "Will they ever receive the light?"

"Well, how did you get on, John? We have been praying for you; even the baby asked the Lord to 'Love the Tibetan woman.' Why! have you brought the milk back again?"

"It is no good, Harry. I can do nothing for her—at least, not out there," he wisely added. "The poor woman is worse to-day. And, can you guess what I saw? Why you can't believe it! Just as I got there, that fool of a priest took out a small image from his charm-box, wrapped in dirty silk. He cut off a piece of this idol and gave it to the sick girl to eat, which she did with much difficulty, managing to wash it down with some nasty tea held to her parched lips in a basin made out of a human skull! He then tore off a little of the rag the idol was wrapped in and set fire to it, while she tried to inhale the smoke. He has no doubt tried various things before. The girl seems to take his things helplessly. I could not stand her eyes on me, Harriet, so I left without a word and brought the things with me back again." *

"How dreadful! Maybe if I went with you she could be induced to come over here, away from that awful man," the Missionary's wife proposed. He had also thought of the same thing, but had dismissed the idea as impossible of fulfilment.

* These charms are made in Monasteries, or by "holy" priests anywhere from finely ground dsamba, mixed with some of the priest's spittle, and then blessed by him. The silk in which it is wrapped (if previously worn by a lama) may also be eaten as a therapeutic.

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"You may see what you can do," he said, with emphasis on the pronoun; his face lighting up as he spoke. He had known his wife to succeed where he had failed ere now, and was rather proud than otherwise of acknowledging it.

"I am going up to the Fair ground for a meeting," the Missionary remarked a little later, "and you can think it over." He did not leave her to do all the thinking, but planned and planned. He would take his wife and servant woman in chairs to see the Tibetan woman, and in case the latter consented, she might be brought over in one of the sedan chairs. The idea fired him, and he was already thanking God for going to answer their prayers, as he pushed his way through the west gate to the Fair ground.

Though the Missionary had had a great deal to discourage and little to cheer him during all the years he had toiled in this fair spot, he yet went forth in hope and confidence to another labour of love the next morning, followed by his wife, his little boy and Bible-woman, his face bearing the look of one who had by no means lost faith in the Gospel, as being the power of God unto salvation.

They found all the Tibetan household at the tent, with the exception of the lama, who had gone on a pilgrimage to "Jeedsushan"—a sacred mountain and great Buddhist resort, three days east of Talifu. This was, indeed, good news. None of the others exerted any authority over Trashy, leaving her free to do as she thought best.

Trashy looked at her visitors and recollected the much talked of and generally hated and feared Catholic priests in Batang—a fear and hatred largely engendered and augmented by their rivals, the lamas. But this missionary, she said to herself, now calling for the third time, did not



A TIBETAN TEACHER OF TACHIENLU, WITH HIS DAUGHTER.

Saved by Missionaries

have a long, flowing beard like the Catholics, and he was married and had children. Surely these people could not be the same. Through one of the Tibetans who understood some Chinese, the missionary lady explained to Trashi that she could not expect to get well under the circumstances in which she was situated, and warmly invited her to the Yesutang (their home), where she would get medicine and attention. During the conversation that followed one of the Tibetan women appeared anxious and a little obstructive. The Chinese Bible woman noticing this, spoke enthusiastically of her employers, but her words, unhappily, were but partially understood and translated. Meantime the two little boys had become friends and were apparently happy in each other's company.

Turning to her kind host of the tent Trashi said resolutely: "I will go; please be not angry with me."

"Dro na ga, shè mo go" ("Better that you go, you need not be afraid") was his startling reply. "I will go with you to their house," he kindly added, in order to cheer the young woman he had rescued and whom he had learned to regard as his special charge, for he had passed by Bamehgong more than once, and Dorje, the chief, was not altogether unknown to him.

"She is a sweet little woman," remarked the lady missionary, as Trashi bade good-bye to her friends in the tent. "Look at her beautiful teeth and eyes. Her face might pass for a European's. But my! They are a dirty lot," the speaker continued, as they turned homewards. "The first thing will be to give her a good bath and some clean clothes." But these details scarcely reached her husband's ears; he was welling over with gratitude for this new opportunity of doing good, and for answered prayer on behalf of one belonging to that far-off and secluded nation—the Tibetans.

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He had done everything that was possible for the Chinese of Talifu, using every means in his power to "bring them over," but they seemed embedded in callousness and pride. His message had met with little response. To have induced a Tibetan to come to his house for treatment was to him an evident answer to prayer; and as he walked homewards behind the chairs, in one of which Trashi was carried, his faith rose high, and prayer flowed for the complete conversion of this interesting woman, so miraculously brought under his influence.



CHARACTERISTIC TIBETAN TYPES.

1. A Mongolian, or Tibetan, lama. 2. A wandering native who had four square inches of his skull taken out in consequence of injuries by falling rocks. 3. A lama of Batang.
4. A water carrier of Tachienlu.

CHAPTER VI

Gezang and the Robbers

TO turn back to the robbers' attack on the little party of travellers, it will be recalled that Gezang, as Trashi was being dragged away, had shouted to her his intention of following on with assistance. This was not idle talk. He called together no fewer than six "Drogpas" (nomads), making eight with Norbo and himself, and these, all mounted on swift ponies, were on the road in pursuit of their enemies within two hours after the unexpected encounter.

All through the long night they pressed on with feverish energy in the track of Trashi's captors, upheld by the hope of effecting her rescue, and determined to sell their lives, if need be, in her defence. As dawn was breaking and tingeing the eastern sky with the first faint flush of morning, they heard loud groans as of someone in severe pain just below the road leading along the right bank of the Yangtze river. Halting, they searched the place. Lying beside a heap of wood, built like an altar, one of the robber party was found nearly dead from the wounds inflicted the previous day by Gezang's sword.

His half-open mouth smelt strongly of wine and in his hand he held a flint-stone, steel and tinder, evidently in readiness to light his own stake. His fingers were smeared with opium, and his teeth showed signs of the

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same drug—the final comfort of the hopeless. A pitiable spectacle he presented, as he lay half naked and helpless. Anxious to obtain what information he could from the dying man, Gezang vigorously shook him back to consciousness, and in broken sentences he answered the eager questions put to him. Then he tried to raise himself and, failing in the effort, asked the men to lift him on to the pile of wood. At first they hesitated, not wishing to have any share in the lonely sufferer's death, though one of the nomads recommended that they should accede with the request, cremation being the only form of departure desired by Lolos.

As they stood by in indecision, the wounded man fell into a stupor from which he could not be aroused. This helped the others to a decision. Lifting the unconscious form, they placed him on the pile and set fire to it, believing that in so acting they were doing a service to the dying man, which had been planned and prepared for by his companions.

In this ceremony of immolation Gezang had no part, but stood aside counting his beads and murmuring "Ommanipemehum"—the empty formula, which may be construed to mean "O Thou in the lotus flower!" and yet the most powerful factor in the lives of Tibetans, whether in sickness or health, in joy or sorrow, in youth or age. It sobers the frivolous, cheers the sad, is an incentive to holiness and atones for sin, whether spoken by mouth, turned round in a cylinder by hand, water, wind or smoke, whether hoisted on poles or chiselled in stone—possibly all because the spell, being mysterious, is therefore regarded as superhuman and divine. The Tibetan's faith in the spiritual and unseen is tremendous. He sees the Buddha incarnate in sinful forms of dust and worships him in the smallest child. Tibet is a mighty

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garden of weeds, nourished from below, unchecked from without.

The fire blazed up as if eager to carry off its wretched victim towards the blue expanse, and the small party of onlookers turning their back on the gruesome scene hastened away, proceeding along the bank of the mighty river till they came to a village, where three of them took to the river in a coracle while the other five rode on. Near the ferry, between Atentze and Chongtien, the avenging Tibetans closed in upon their prey. The Lolos had been delayed in their flight through ignorance of the roads, and on their arrival at the ferry were disappointed at not finding their companion and Trashilhamo awaiting them. In vain did they wait for their arrival. Near the ferry the Tibetans found them, and a fierce fight was soon in progress. Though the Lolos were well armed with modern rifles — bought and stolen from Chinese soldiers—they had no chance against the Tibetans, now increased in number, and soon the former were worsted in the encounter and bound with stout cords. The fight over, Gezang rewarded the Tibetan volunteers with money taken from their enemies, a good bulk of which he kept for future use.

But now, with their victory complete, the Tibetans were practically as helpless as the Lolos in regard to future plans. They had been successful in capturing the Lolos, but *one* was missing—the man who had taken Trashilhamo down the river. No information could be obtained from their prisoners—not even by the help of the whip or the back of the sword. What had become of Trashi and the Lolo. Had both been drowned, or had they escaped both friends and foes? With the problem still unsolved, they eventually disbanded. Two well-armed men took the prisoners to Atentze for committal;

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two others (one of them Gezung) proceeded by road southwards along the river, calling at the various villages for information; two more went by boat down the river, while the other two rode up the left side of the river homewards.

These last met a large company of Tibetans, armed to the teeth in Tibetan fashion, with long-forked matchlocks and heavy swords, the expedition being headed by Dorje, the Pønbo, who, having heard of the calamity, had aroused the highland valley on behalf of the well-known and well-loved Trashilhamo, his only daughter. At the information received from his son Norbo, his face lit up for a moment, and then darkened again, while his eyes filled with tears and his broad, lean shoulders heaved with emotion.

"Trashī must be at the bottom of this cruel river," he said, and gave orders to return home.

Norbo could offer him no consolation, as his own heart ached over his sister, and he feared that what his father said was only too true. Overwhelmed with sorrow at the tragic situation, they all stood in silent amazement. For a while no one spoke, till at length the Pønbo himself broke the painful silence by saying, "We must wait till Gezung comes." It sounded rather pathetic that he should trust so much to Gezung, and yet the suggestion brought a flicker of hope to most of the party, even to Norbo, who seemed to feel the calamity most. What had not Gezung done for him and Trashī in the past? Where had he failed? It seemed almost hopeless for Gezung to try and find her farther down, but Gezung had himself suggested the possibility.

In course of time they reached the winter grazing grounds belonging to Bamehgong—or rather occupied by the farmers who claimed the right to this region according



A MILE OF "MANI" SLABS, INSCRIBED WITH THE MYSTIC FORMULÆ "OMMANIPEMEHEMUM,"
"OMWAGISHERIMUM," Etc.

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to their own way of reckoning—and to everybody's astonishment the chief himself selected and took back with him to Bamehgong quite a drove of yak, cows, sheep and goats for Trashilhamo, "as part of her dowry," he said to his wife on reaching home. "That is what she went for," he added solemnly, "and she will not need to go down again when she comes; and—if—she—does not come—these—may—be given to the "Gomba" (lamasery).

Dorje's wife, Pålma, had seized this sad opportunity of showing her piety. Six well-fed priests installed in the best room of the big stone building were already at work reading through a horseload of sacred books of polished parchment, written in gold and silver, and ornamented with gold paintings of Buddhist deities at either end of the silk-covered title pages.

They made no small noise at times with their big drums and hand drums, their bells and trumpets. The roomy building resounded with their chants, and yet no one seemed to mind the disturbance.

Drölma's abilities were taxed to the utmost in the arduous work of satisfying the internal cravings of these militant deities and the few guests who had come from a distance to attend the wedding.

It was not a pleasant time for the "Pønkang" (Palace), and all the while Gezang had not returned. His absence suggested a faint hope of Trashi's return, and rendered the heart partly inure to the overwhelming calamity.

CHAPTER VII

Sowing the Seed

A BEAUTIFUL Sunday morning had dawned, after a few days of rain and wind. The fertile plain of Tali was full of beans, opium and corn, and the farmers rejoiced in a bountiful spring harvest.

In the low, little building in a back street, whose partitions had been removed to form a small chapel, the Missionary was conducting a service, and was announcing a hymn after a lengthy and laborious address in Chinese listened to by his wife and family, his servants, and a few stray outsiders. The Missionary's wife, sitting before the tiny organ, turned the leaves of Sankey's hymn-book to find a suitable tune for the Chinese hymn just given out. But her thoughts were not altogether centred on the service of praise. "This sermon should have been listened to by a full church," she said to herself, and the fact that there had been only a handful of hearers disturbed her more than she would have cared to confess.

And there was some justification for her inward complaint. To watch this man of God preaching and exhorting, and to listen to him as he prayed gave one a new idea of missionary enthusiasm, and yet such zeal and earnestness seemed almost pathetic in view of the empty benches still waiting for occupants after years of devoted labour.

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"Be thou faithful"—not, successful—was the divine command that fired this man and made his life a grand success, incognito.

The hymn was sung, and the preacher left the room with a contented and beaming face. "It is worth while keeping at it, Harriet," he said to his devoted wife, "for the good it does one's own self." She smiled back as she answered: "You have a patience like that of Job, John. May it be equally well rewarded."

Just then there was a loud knock at the front door, and the servant woman ran, as fast as her stunted feet would permit, to open it in answer to the imperative summons.

"Teacher," she called out, hurrying back from the door, "Guests have come!" The Missionary went out and found one of his friends from the tent, together with another Tibetan, who, holding his felt hat with both hands over the lower part of his body, thrust out his tongue and bowed profoundly, in Tibetan fashion.

The stranger was a man with a sturdy frame, of medium height, dark and sunburned face, partly shaded by a low fringe of hair, eager black eyes, and dressed in a warm sheep-skin gown, tied with a sash round the waist. Invited in to the Chinese guest hall, the visitors preceded the Missionary with bended backs and cautious steps—as if treading on holy ground. Once in the guest hall they were with difficulty persuaded to sit *on* the chairs in foreign fashion, and not on the ground beside them. Then the newcomer in sheep's clothing, with a smiling face, which yet wore a frightened expression, asked in bad Chinese for Trashilhamo.

"Trashilhamo?" the Missionary repeated, greatly bewildered. Scarce had the name been repeated twice, than, from the next room, "The glorious goddess" called out in tones of great excitement, "Gezang! Gezang!"

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The man rose to his feet and made for the room from which the well-known voice had been heard, followed by the Missionary, who had at last awakened to the fact that someone, possibly the father, had come to claim his patient. He quickly opened the door leading to the little side room, where Trashi lay half reclining on her bed.

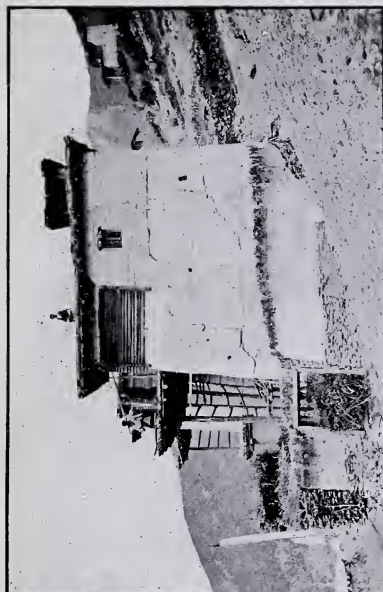
The meeting that followed, being difficult to describe, is much better left to the imagination. It began with shouts of "Ahtsi! Ahtsi!" as soon as Gezang saw the loved form of the one who had been given up for lost, and Trashi was equally boisterous in her joy. Grasping each other's hands they gave way to their feelings of delight, making many strange gestures under the excitement which they could not control.

A rapid conversation followed between the two, and then Gezang turned and knelt before the Missionary, knocking his head three times against the floor, as a token of gratitude.

"Toche che! toche che!" ("Thank you! thank you") he exclaimed, out of the fulness of his heart, and Trashi feelingly added, "Ku tse ring gye."

Now free from the fever which had laid her low, she looked almost herself again, only cleaner than when he saw her last.

"Will they let you go?" asked Gezang, anxiously. "Of course they will," answered Trashi, "but I have nothing to pay them with, and it may cost a great deal. They have given me medicine and food for about ten days, and shown me much kindness. They are so kind," she added, looking after the missionary who went out into the court with his own sad thoughts. He was glad that some one had come for the poor girl—who had been stolen away as he had found out—but sad to think that she had learned so little about the Gospel, and would practically



SCENES IN THE FORBIDDEN LAND ON THE ROOF OF THE WORLD.

1. Dr. Shelton's Chinese escort on the way to visit sick people near Batang: a priest is seated on the white horse.
2. A house thirty miles north-west of Batang in which Dr. Shelton visited a man with broken legs: they had never seen a foreigner.
3. Loading yak with tea for the interior.
4. A tea caravan unloading for the night

Sowing the Seed

"leave as she came," as far as any knowledge of the Christian religion was concerned.

True, he and his wife had not been able to impart much oral teaching regarding Christianity, as their guest understood so little Chinese, but they had unsparingly used "Livingstone's language" (of love) so universally understood, and had given her a copy of the Gospel of St. Mark, printed in Tibetan, which she had tried to read, though with trembling and hesitation at first. They had secretly hoped that she would remain with them, but now she was about to leave, and their hearts were heavy at the thought of parting.

"I have money," said Gezag, in answer to Trashi's fears about payment, joyfully, "and have brought 'Ragpa' (her favourite horse) for you to ride home on." Her heart overflowed with gratitude and joy, and she started to explain in Chinese to her missionary friends that Gezag had come for her, and would they please let her know how much her stay cost.

"You must not go yet," insisted the kind lady of the house. "You must wait for a few days longer until you are quite strong. We do not want anything for your stay; don't be in a hurry to leave us." So all her fears were dispelled, and she rose up that she might prostrate herself before the missionaries, after the custom of her people, but the lady held her hand up in protest.

The next day Gezag came back with numerous presents for his benefactors, and insisted on their accepting them. He also brought certain articles for Trashi which she had ordered, and went out again with fresh orders for odds and ends to take home. Soap was among the curious things absolutely insisted upon.

A few happy days followed, and then Gezag brought "Ragpa" to the mission house. After taking a most

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affectionate leave of her friends, Trashi mounted her sturdy pony and rode away for Bamehgong with Gezang, leaving the missionary family behind on the stone steps looking after her vanishing form, and wondering whether the good seed which they had so earnestly and prayerfully sown would yet spring up into a living harvest.

"They have got a Tibetan Gospel each, and the word may do what we have not been able to do, my dear," the Missionary remarked to his wife in a tone of concern, giving expression to the thoughts which filled both their minds. "We must ask God to use His own messengers to speak and shed light where we are debarred from going."

"Yes," said his wife, "is it not cruel to think that Tibet should thus be closed to everybody. These people really seem so nice in many ways, and there is so much one could do to raise them spiritually and socially. When will Tibet's long-closed door be open so that the Gospel may freely enter with its glorious, life-giving message?"

She was not the first to ask the question; but God's answers come in His own good time.



BRIDGE NEAR LITANG, EASTERN TIBET.



LOADED YAK GRAZING IN A FIELD BY THE WAYSIDE.



A BRIDGE AT BATANG.

CHAPTER VIII

Home Again

IT was a great scene that was witnessed on the eastern slope of the Bameh Valley when Gezang triumphantly returned home with the Pønbo's only daughter. The glad news speedily flew through the valley, and as they heard it the neighbours streamed in to see Trashi and Gezang and to congratulate them upon their home-coming. The Pønbo's eyes were seldom quite dry on that eventful afternoon, while his heart was much too full for words. Under the strain of the sudden joy and relief his feelings got beyond his control and expressed themselves in hysterical bursts of laughter, accompanied by tears. His wife, Pålma, seemed a new woman, and was not in the least afraid of showing her feelings of gratitude, surprise and joy.

Ngawang, or Tsering, was also present, but while in some degree entering into the spirit of the occasion, he seemed to regard it more from the standpoint of an outsider than as a member of the family. Trashi spoke glowingly of her benefactors, the horse dealer and the missionaries, and even produced from the saddle bags the book given her by the latter. She did not dwell much on her long journey back over high passes and deep valleys, along cliffs and through beautiful scenery in the Mekong river basin, or even on her eventful descent of the Yangtze

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river in a coracle, her heart being strangely full of impressions received through human channels.

Contrary to his customary dignity, Dorje was lauding Gezang for his bravery and resource, and he even went the length of presenting him with a splendid sword, sheathed in silver, as a mark of appreciation of his gallant conduct.

"Let me see that book," asked Tsering, when Trashi produced the much-prized Gospel given her by the missionaries. Carefully she removed the silk covering and handed the book to her brother, who was sitting cross-legged by the fire.

"You hold it for me," he said, being afraid to touch it, lest he should be contaminated.

"No, you take it," demanded Trashi, with spirit, placing the open book on his lap as she spoke.

Almost the first word to catch his eye was "Yeshu." "Muhdigpa gi pecha" ("heathen book") he remarked with a grin, and, with unconcealed disgust, proceeded to lift the precious volume into the fire with a pair of pine splinters. Trashi, however, anticipated the movement, and, pulling the book from her brother with some show of indignation, wrapped it reverently in its silken cover. She was determined to defend her treasure, for was it not the gift of the friends who had come to her help in the hour of need?

Seeing his sister's determination, Tsering resolved to counteract as far as he could the missionary influence, and with much show of learning began to explain to the whole company that the evil purpose of such foreigners and heathen was to draw the Tibetans away from the truth of God to worship "Yeshu," an ancient prophet, "and finally to get us to tie our heads to them (become converts). They then live on the converts and usurp

Home Again

power," he proceeded, growing eloquent as his indignation increased. "There is talk of again pulling down their house in Batang, as some seem foolish enough even to join the infidels. Cursed things. In Central Tibet they know more about foreigners than we do here, and though many speak well of them, the priests and rulers of the land are always on their guard against intrusion, knowing that the day they enter Tibet, Buddhism will fall and wane.

"There will be no gompas and trabas after they gain the power. There is a prediction in our sacred books of such a time being in store for Tibet—an invasion of outside heathen and enemies of Buddha. But after a period of suppression Buddhism will revive again like the sun rising in his strength. These are perilous times, and we must see to it that we are not led astray by the emissaries of the Devil."

The last sentence of this grand speech was thrown with great dexterity at Trashi, who was just waiting her turn to explain things. Nor was she slow to accept the challenge of her brother.

"The people," she said, "who gave me this book are not the same as those you speak of. They are married people, with several children, and live only to do good. I stayed with them about half a month, and they would take no payment for it. They gave me medicine and food. They washed my clothes, and let me have a clean, little room all to myself. I would have died had they not helped me. Although the Chinese speak evil of them, they give them medicine, and constantly exhort them to repent and be good.

"One night when I was very ill and thought I would die," Trashi went on in her brave defence of her friends, "his wife watched over me like a mother and prayed for

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me—at least she knelt down by my bed and fervently spoke to someone; it was not to me. When her husband came in to see me in the morning he knelt down and did the same, after giving me medicine. They have no gods, no prayer-wheels, no rosaries, but seem to believe that God Himself is everywhere, and worship Him with the heart, without any medium. They are really good people.”

“Just so,” said the chief, with much emphasis and nodding of the head. “I wish I could send them something, but they are so far away.”

“I gave them a few presents,” added Trashi, “but they would scarcely accept them.”

“Nying-je,” said a chorus of voices, and Drølma dried her eyes with her thick woollen apron.

Gezang did not hear this outspoken defence of the missionaries; but he had heard it over and over again from Trashi's lips on the long journey home. Alarmed by Tsering's warning, he had remained to hear nothing more. If what had just been spoken was true, then he must have no dealings with these dangerous people, the missionaries, nor with anything belonging to them. Hastily climbing up to the flat roof of the house, he began tearing his book into the smallest pieces, fervently repeating “Ommanipemehum” while engaged in this operation, for having allowed himself to be contaminated by the evil foreigners.

Trashi, however, in spite of threats, remained firm to her convictions, and her influence soon began to tell even on the Pönbo, as well as on others.

“Where is Treshiang?” asked Trashilhamo one morning, “I have not seen her.”

“Oh, poor woman, she is off with the oola” (forced labour imposed in lieu of taxes) “As she has no horse



DR. SHELTON PAYING LUMBER CARRIERS IN HIS YARD AT BATANG.

Home Again

now she has had to carry a load to Gyanehting this morning," her mother added. "You know her husband is still ill, and the Monastery of Batang has taken the best land from him in lieu of a debt he owed the priest. As soon as the priest died, about a month ago, all his money went to the lamasery, and they have shown but little mercy to his debtors. Now Aggutsering has to till the land for them, and get only a few bags of barley for it. Besides, he is very ill, and will likely go soon.

"Ah, is that so? He is only a young man," said Drølma. "What will become of his wife and two children?"

"That is too bad of the trabas. What right have they to take the bread from other people? Disgusting!" exclaimed Trashilhamo with much feeling, at which her mother gave her a rebuking glance, and the conversation was carried no further.

The prediction which had been uttered, however, was very soon afterwards fulfilled. The afflicted Aggutsering, a man of thirty, did not live much longer to endure the persecution of the religious authorities. His wife was working in the field one day at her enforced task when she saw little Rabtob, her elder son of four years, ascend the log of wood on to the roof, and heard him shout, "Ama! Ama!" ("mother, mother!") Having thus attracted his mother's attention, the little naked fellow scrambled down the ladder again into the kitchen, where his younger brother was crying bitterly. Hurrying into the house with a great fear at her heart, the poor woman was just in time to see her husband breathe his last; a minute later his corpse lay upon the floor of the big kitchen, used also as the bedroom, sitting room and dining room of the impoverished family.

Trashilhamo had always been a good friend of

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Treshiang, and it was now to her that the poor, distracted and stricken woman ran in her need.

Aggutsering was soon bound into a bundle, with his head between his knees, according to Tibetan fashion, and then carried by friends to the top of a high mountain near Bameh. There a fire was lighted—an unfailing signal for the vultures to assemble—and the barbarous ceremony was at once in progress.

A rope round the neck having been tied to a stone, the body was chopped into squares, while the priest stood by reading prescribed selections of “holy writ.” As soon as the corpse was thus prepared the men stood back a little way, and the large birds of prey, swooping down from their watch in the sky, carried off everything, except the skeleton, which, with the brain, was pounded into pulp in a stone mortar kept on the mountain for the purpose.

Again the men stood back a few feet and watched the birds devour the last remains of Aggutsering, and then, the burial rites being over, they turned their faces homewards.

Savage and repulsive as it is, this method of inhumation is regarded by the Tibetans as the best and most effective way of treating the bodies of the departed, and only notorious sinners and plague-stricken mortals are buried in the earth—the last calamity that can befall a Tibetan.

In the deepest poverty as she was, Treshiang found it difficult to pay the priests for reading “mass” for her husband, but it must not be neglected. She gladly underwent semi-starvation for about six months, following his death, in order to pay for this all-important ceremony of delivering him from purgatory! Barley flour and black tea kept soul and body together during these months of extreme tension, and after all the whole farm was taken



A GREAT PILE OF "MANI" STONES AT BATANG.

Home Again

over by the lamas, who let it to a new tenant, in spite of Trashilhamo's efforts to save the afflicted woman from becoming a homeless outcast.

Treated thus by the lamas, who ought to have assisted and not oppressed the suffering household, the little family was separated for ever from one another. The mother was set to pull the big prayer wheel, some eight feet high, in a neighbouring gompā, and was paid in dsamba for revolving this massive prayer cylinder for the various people seeking merit by this means. Her elder son was taken into the lamasery as a servant or slave, the younger boy was kindly adopted by Dorje Semden, while the woman herself kept on turning the wheel, like an ox grinding corn, till, one evening, death kindly released her patient spirit from the engine of the merit factory.

CHAPTER IX

The Rising Rebellion

SOME twenty years after the events narrated in the preceding chapters, we find the "Glorious goddess" at Ranang in her comfortable house by the main road.

She is now the mother of two boys—one eighteen years old, the other fifteen—her first child (a daughter) having died in infancy, as commonly "happens" to the first-born. Many things had taken place since we saw Trashi last at Bamehgong, her interesting wedding, which in itself would almost form sufficient material for a book; her journey from Bamehgong to Ranang, over high passes and through beautiful ravines covered with rhododendrons, orchids, edelweiss and other flowers, her early experiences as "lady Norbo," the "christening" of her children and their baptism on the seventh day after birth—during which ceremony the lama baptized both mother and child, etc.

The only trial of her married life had been her husband's devotion to lamaism—especially at first. Of late a change had taken place, but he was still bigoted, though in every respect the kindest of husbands and fathers to Trashi and the two boys.

It must be understood that Trashilhamo's conversion consisted, so far, in having begun to think—a lost faculty in Tibet where self-renunciation rules heart and brain.



THREE INHABITANTS OF THE CAPITAL CITY OF LHASSA.

The Rising Rebellion

She still burned incense on the roof, and sometimes repeated "Ommanipemehum"—the only expression of devotion with which she was acquainted. She had learned to read her book, and prized it because of its associations.

Seldom did she read it without her thoughts going back to Talifu, and in her mind she could still see the form of one kneeling in prayer beside her bed at the break of day. As she read, her thoughts were more and more directed to the subject of the Gospel, and, by and by, she faintly discovered that she was herself an object of the Saviour's sacrifice. This led her to study the book with ever deepening interest, and she even began to teach it to her boys, who were almost the only people in Ranang not prejudiced against the religion of the foreigners.

One evening, as the boys were helping the servant girl to bring in the cattle, Trashi standing meanwhile at the broad entrance to the stables forming the first or lower storey of the house, her husband—now the Ranang chief—came galloping down the road from the northern end of the valley, his long forked gun sticking out on both sides.

He had been to Litang on important business, and his wife and sons, together with most of the neighbours, were anxiously awaiting his return.

Trashi caught the bridle as her husband came up, and held the animal by the gate, while their sons took off the cushions, saddle bags, etc., and then tied the horse to one of the thick posts supporting the upper storey of the house. The old servant, who lived in an adjoining building, came running in and released the chief of his gun as they ascended the steep staircase leading from the stables on to a kind of upper court or landing surrounded by well-kept rooms.

In the Land of the Lamas

The Pönbo took his seat, as usual, on a cushion by the fire pan fitted into a nicely polished low table. He then produced a silver-lined wooden teacup from his bosom, and the smart servant girl lifted the earthenware teapot from the hot ashes, where she had been keeping it ready, and with both hands poured its delicious contents into the chief's cup. Then removing the cover from the dsamba bowl, she left the room.

"You remember the Amban who went into Batang some little time ago?" he said to his wife, as soon as they were alone. "Well, he gave orders to the abbot there that the priests should learn the art of war, and handed over a great many rifles to be used in drilling. You know that it is against the lamaistic order to be occupied with warfare and the taking of life. Still, they very unwillingly commenced drilling. Again, he gave orders that the monks should marry and become more or less like ordinary people. Of course, they could never do any such thing, and they refused to obey. Not only so, but they threatened to kill him, saying he could not be sent by the Emperor, but by foreigners with such orders. 'He is a foreigner!' they cried, and were going to kill him. He is now hiding in the palace of the 'first chief of Batang,' and there is likely going to be a rebellion over this matter. The lamas all over are one about it."

"Holy Trinity!" he exclaimed, after a momentary pause in his narrative, "what am I to do? They want me to join in the rebellion and drive out the Chinese. But we cannot do it, Trashi," he added.

"No, don't you do it," counselled his wife. "The Amban may be wrong, but they are certainly not right, either, in raising a rebellion."

"Have you burned that book, Trashi?" her husband asked a minute later, in a trembling voice.



ON THE SUMMIT OF DASO PASS, NEAR BATANG, OVER 15,000 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL.

The Rising Rebellion

"No, that I have not," she answered.

"What will come to us if the lamas find out that we have such a book in the house? They will not spare us in the general destruction."

"I am not afraid of them," she calmly answered, "but I will hide it so none of them can find it."

"Well, do that," he demanded, "and fetch out your rosary and prayer-wheel. If we cannot join them, we must not oppose them. To be allied with foreigners now is certain death, I fear."

Trashi said nothing, but thought the more. Her brother Tsering was now practically at the head of the Batang Lamasery. Could it be that he would countenance a general uprising? She thought he would. He was no longer Tsering, but Ngawang. "Dso-o Kønchog!" ("Oh, Lord God"!) she said, and went to hide her treasured possession—the Book, hated and persecuted by evil men and women ever since it started on its mission against darkness and evil, and yet, instead of ever being exterminated, steps on its dead persecutors to greater victories.

CHAPTER X

Through Fire and Blood

“O THAT the Protestant Missionaries would come ! Oh that they would come ! ” exclaimed the Batang chief repeatedly, as he saw the clouds thickening around him.

He had always treated them with marked respect and kindness when they had visited Batang, but could it be that this man—a great and important personage in his way—was repeating the Macedonian cry from a spiritual motive ? That seems hardly possible, and yet history points that way.

The groan (because such it was, according to what his assistant told me on the spot) resounded throughout the agitated country, and was even whispered in Ranang !

The man, brought up in his fine palace, crowded and surrounded by monks ; could it be that he was now afraid of them—his own spiritual advisers, protectors and guardians.

But for what could he hope from two or three missionaries. The answers to these questions have been buried with the good man in the ruins of Batang till the great day of revelation.

The ecclesiastic wrath rose high beyond control against real and imaginary foes. To get the Amban out of the Batang palace the lamas promised that they would spare his life if he would return to China. Accordingly he started



A GRAVE NEAR BATANG.

It was in the vicinity of this grave that the Amban and his men were attacked and killed by the lamas. The main road runs through the opening shown in the erection.



A TOWER OF REFUGE NEAR GOLAK, EASTERN TIBET.

It was in the vicinity of this tower that the Amban and his men were attacked and killed by the lamas. The main road runs through the opening shown in the erection.

Through Fire and Blood

with twenty of his men, for that country. But foul treachery was at work, and the good man never reached his journey's end. Coming to the narrow gorge some three miles east of Batang, he and his men were attacked and butchered by the faithless priests. A few big Chinese characters in the rock now mark the spot where envoy Fong died—a Chinese martyr to the reform of Tibet—while a little lower down may be seen the long grave, where sleep the twenty men who fought by his side till they dropped one by one never to rise again.

The rebellion now broke out in earnest. The lust for blood must be gratified. Mobs of fierce and cruel men gave way to their fiendish passions, murdering all the Chinese who came within their grasp, as well as all who were suspected of having any connection with the foreigners. Day after day the same terrible slaughter was continued. The French priests were cruelly killed in the lay village of monastic slaves on the other side of the Batang river, where they had fled for refuge.

From Batang, the rising spread west to Tsaka and south to Atentze, Tsøgoo, east to Shiangchen, Litang and elsewhere. Everywhere it was marked by murder and extermination. The lay people looked on in horror at the lamas trying to rid themselves of all that was antagonistic to themselves and their order ; but they were too terrified to raise any protest. Many innocent persons perished, for no discrimination marked the slaughter, and the murdering lamas were determined to do their work regardless either of pity or of justice.

The Ranang chief and others were anxious and uneasy, while the Litang chiefs were defiant, and at last fled into hiding. In Litang the troops sent in to quell the rising, had to set fire to the lamasery before the monks would yield to superior numbers.

In the Land of the Lamas

While these deeds of slaughter were in progress, Trash, much to her husband's relief, had donned the big silver charm-box, suspended in a coral chain round her neck, but his peace of mind would have been less easy had he known that this receptacle contained, not a set of useless charms, but the Gospel of Mark. He did not in the least favour the rebellion, and greatly regretted its cause.

In Litang the Chinese had always had a hard time of it, and the official residence had been torn down on several occasions. The Tibetan priests were naturally delighted at this opportunity of throwing off Chinese suzerainty, hated all over Tibet.

Opposed to such bitterness of feeling and fury of attack, the Chinese troops were sorely pressed. Pouring in from Szchwan and Yunnan, they found themselves the objects of general hatred, and while many of them died from cold and fatigue, still greater numbers met their death at the hands of the furious and blood-thirsty priests.

Proud and able, Chao-ehr-fong came in as commander-in-chief with a great force of well-armed men. The Batang lamas set fire to their fine lamasery and fled. What buildings still remained the Chinese destroyed. The other lamaseries were called upon to submit, but the priests shouted back their defiance, and when at last they did surrender, it was only when defeat left them no other alternative.

At Shiangchen, south-east of Batang, the capital of the Shiangchen or Shandreh Province, the deciding battle between the opposing armies was stubbornly fought. "Tell Chao-ehr-fong that if he is hard up for food he can come and get some dsamba here," was the haughty message sent by the Shiangchen lamas, confident in the belief that the Chinese forces could not break down the defences of the town which was well protected by its splendid wall.

Through Fire and Blood

Long and fiercely did the battle wage, thousands of men falling in the terrible struggle. Besieging the lama town with their weapons of destruction, the Chinese generals flung all their available strength against the fortifications, but courageously as they renewed the attack from time to time they found on each occasion a resistance more than equal to the assault, and each effort ended in failure. Their assurance growing with each repulse of their enemy, the Tibetans, not content with defensive tactics, carried the fight into the quarters of the Chinese, making a bold sortie in the hope of capturing the attacking guns, mounted on the hills close by. Right in the face of heavy firing, they fought their way up the hill, but were eventually driven back to the shelter of their own camp.

Baffled in their attempt to take the town by direct assault, the Chinese endeavoured to imitate the action of the Japs at Port Arthur by digging a tunnel underneath the resisting wall. With feverish energy and wonderful endurance they persevered at their task, but to their dismay they found that this expenditure of time and labour ended in utter failure, as, owing to miscalculations, their cutting operations terminated on the side from which a start had been made !

Though defeated in this effort, they were bent on trying other methods of reducing the besieged town to a state of submission, and finally succeeded in cutting off the water supply, thus reducing considerably the chances of a long resistance. Seeing at last that further defence was useless, the lamas fled by night through the Chinese ranks, leaving behind them large numbers of wounded and dying.

"Blood flowed in streams, and the dead lay in long piles." But before the great religious house fell into Chinese hands, the lamas showed the barbarity of which

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they were capable. Skinning Chinese officers who fell into their cruel hands, they placed them before the idols, and dragged them into the presence of the captured soldiers.

"Here are your officers," they cried, in ridicule: "Salute them."

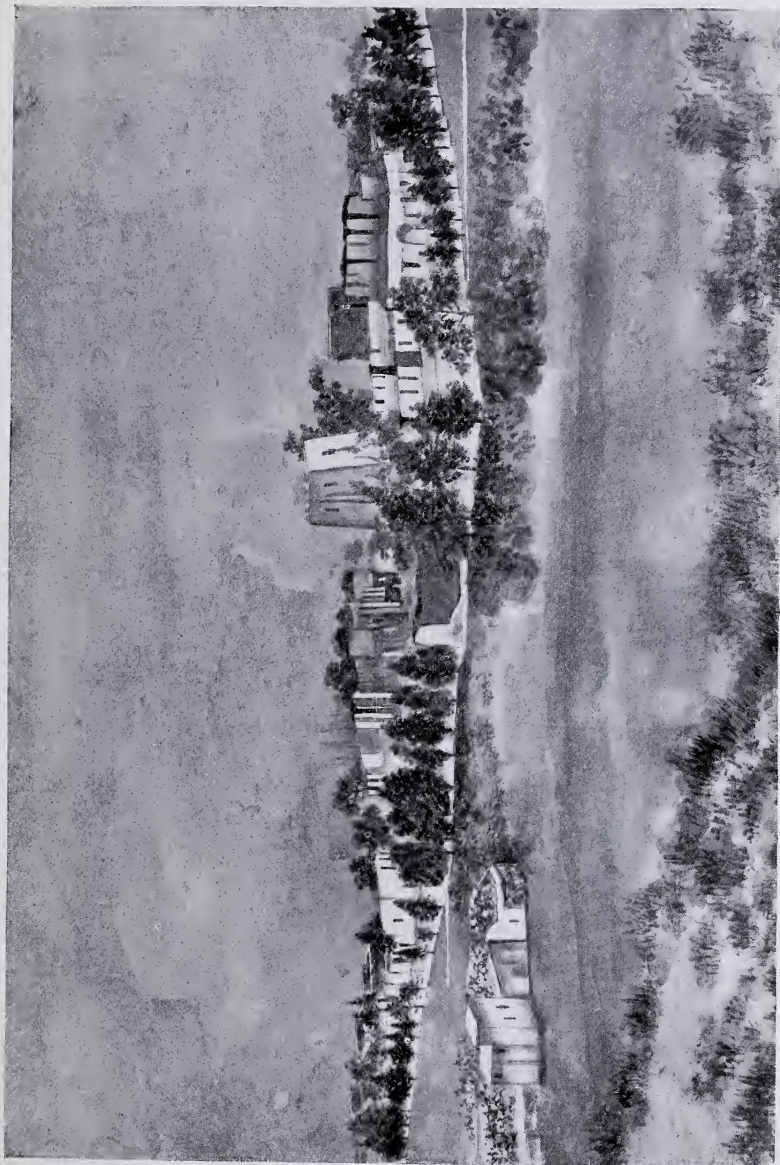
In other districts also, the lamas caused fire and blood.

They burned the town of Atentze and all but succeeded in starving out the people. Unable to withstand the compulsion of the priests, innocent and friendly men were brought into the ranks of the rebellion, and had it not been that many of the people maintained a neutral attitude, the Tibetans in all probability would have completely destroyed Chinese suzerain power in the whole of Tibet.

As a result of the broken power of the lamas, the fertile plains of Batang and elsewhere can now be enjoyed in peace by the relieved inhabitants—a wonderful change from the days of oppression, when the bulk of the crops were carried into the monastic granaries.

But what about Ranang, its chief and his family?

That forms the saddest part of this story, and must be left for the next chapter.



THE RUINS OF BATANG LAMASERY: Drawn from a photograph taken by the Author.



A TIBETAN TEACHER OF BATANG, NW. 1280.

CHAPTER XI

Into Everlasting Life

THE Chinese, and indeed most Asiatics, can be guilty of great cruelty when they get into a position of power. At the conclusion of actual war, Chao, with all the elation of a victor, led an army of captive Tibetans from their homes and families down into China, as trophies for the Chinese crown. They formed a pitiable sight. Women and men in curious costumes, from Shiangchen and other out-of-the-way parts, swelled the ranks to the interest of curious Chinese.

Among the miserable captives was the Ranang chief, Norbo, Trashi's husband. The humiliation of the situation, its injustice, the separation from home and family, the doubtful future, and other gloomy circumstances chafed and galled the innocent, peaceable man beyond endurance. "What had he now to live for," he asked himself over and over again, as he wearily trudged from his lovely highland valley, down towards the land where a terrible fate might be awaiting him. Rather than face the dark and unknown future, he would himself end the misery, and resolving to die, he drank a quantity of poison which he had in his possession.

His son had been killed by the lamas for helping the Chinese with transportation of food for the troops at Batang—an act he could not avoid without being guilty of open rebellion.

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And now, bereaved and heart-broken, Trashi stood wringing her hands in the agony of her terrible state. "O Tsering!" she cried, "How could you? Tsering, my brother, Kønchog la, tug-je zii ("Lord have mercy!") Akka, my husband, my jewel; my son! Kotso ngenbare! ("O, they are wicked!") she said, without stating who she meant. Taking the book out of the charm-box, where she had concealed it during the days of trouble, she flung the silver box into the far corner of the room, but immediately picked it up again and kissed it, for was it not a present from the husband whom she would never see again!

She opened the book and threw herself on the floor. As her eyes sought the sacred pages she read the words, "And immediately He talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid. And He went up into the ship and the wind ceased."

She seemed to reflect for a moment; great tears came rolling fast down her face—not tears of sorrow now, for her face bespoke inward calm and rest. Rising to her feet, she put her head out through the square window in the thick stone wall, and called Tøndrup (hope fulfilled), her only remaining son.

Soon he stood before her in the middle of the floor, waiting for his mother to speak. Looking him straight in the face, she said calmly, "Di Kønchog gi tug-dø re" ("It is God's will.")

"We will now get no peace here," she continued, "What shall we stay here for? You see how the Chinese carry on. And then the priests. They don't know God, nor true doctrine. Have mercy upon them!"

Kissing the book, she put it into the charm-box again, and, with Tøndrup, set about collecting her valuables. The old servant was then called in, and given charge of



THREE LAYMEN AND A LAMA FROM DERGÉ, A SECLUDED PROVINCE OF EASTERN TIBET.
They are evidently proud of their foreign firearms which have been procured in some mysterious way.

Into Everlasting Life

the house and property, but not told where his mistress was going.

In the early dawn Trashi, Tøndrup, and a servant rode quickly up the valley, past the various farm houses, bound for Dardsendo—Gospel Hall!

Crossing the Garala (Black-Smith pass), some 16,000 feet high, they met a band of mounted robbers in the guise of traders, who looked carefully at the little party, and after passing them turned round and asked some inquisitive questions, to which the servant made an evasive reply. Then one of the men, holding his long sword near Tøndrup's head, asked "Will you purchase this" (*i.e.* with your life, or give us all you possess?)

In the quarrel which ensued, the "traders" made a demand for money, threatening to take life if this were refused. Trashi thereupon hurried on her horse, and motioned Tøndrup to do the same, leaving the servant to settle as best he could with the robber band.

"Dismount!" they called after the two retreating riders, and started galloping in pursuit. A shot was fired, and this so frightened Trashi that she nearly fell from her startled horse. They were just near the icy summit, with an ice-covered little lake on their right, and high, bare precipices towering into the cold air on their left, when, to their intense relief, they caught sight of a number of travellers, among them a friendly priest, coming towards them from the other side of the pass. Not prepared to face superior numbers, the robbers hastily turned back, taking with them, in their rapid flight, the horse which Trashi's servant had been leading.

The servant uttered a cry as the animal was removed from his grasp, and hurled a large stone at the robber, which brought him down on his back. This saved the situation, and the trio escaped down the other side of

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the pass to the courier station, where they spent the night.

On arriving at Litang, the highest town in the world, Tøndrup wanted his mother to go and see the great halls of the monastery, with their golden spires and plated roofs, and the great gold-covered Buddha in the centre of the main temple, before which the numerous worshippers prostrated themselves; but she would not consent.

"Come and see, mother," he said. "There are 'chøtens' (graves of saints—where some of their ashes is kept) and idols overlaid with gold. There are embroidered silk hangings and paintings, and many rows of butter lamps burning before the gods.

"So many people go to worship that the floor is deeply worn where they put their knees and toes. There is a whole court full of people doing penance. They say there are over 3,000 trabas here, mother. Won't you come and see?" he again asked excitedly.

Trashi had herself at one time been just as excited over these things, and had once felt their awe-inspiring influence. But her heart was now sore by what she had seen behind the monastic scenes, and by her experiences of monastic abomination and cruelty.

"Don't go there again," she said, gently. "It is the devil's workshop, though they do not know it. The trabas have been deceived to deceive. Lord, look in mercy on them!" she said, and lay down on her carpet again, feeling very tired.

Much against her will she had to rest a few days in Litang, during which time she had several talks with the women who came in to see her. The missionaries, both gone to their reward ere this, would not have recognised their timid Tibetan patient in this fearless witness to Divine truth. All who came to see her were astonished



CHINESE DRAWING FROM A PHOTOGRAPH OF A HOUSE IN EASTERN TIBET.

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as she spoke of the things of God, and even the lamas, who came in to visit her landlord, lent a listening ear.

A big, fat priest looked at the others and said with a smile, "Te ngoma re" ("That is the bare truth"). "Dro!" said the others, and the lot of them left, bowing politely as they took their departure.

Tøndrup overheard something on the street that afternoon, which made his mother decide to leave Litang early next morning. So off they started at the break of day, the three riders disturbing herds of antelope and other animals as they crossed the small passes in the silent hours. Great mountains could be seen on both sides, rising some 20,000 feet and more into the cold, clear air.

Hochuka is the name given to the big heap of stones, thrown together so as to form low, dark shanties for the accommodation of a few families. The place is about eighteen miles east of Litang, at an elevation of 13,000 feet, by a small river famous for its golden sand, eagerly sought by Tibetans and Chinese alike.

There Trashi, her son and servant were hospitably given the best room in the stone heap. The door formed the only opening for light and air. By removing a stone slab at the top, a smoke hole was happily discovered. The floor was of mud, the table a stone slab, the "beds" or seats round the room, were built of stone, and covered with turf. When a fire was lighted on the floor, the room was filled with smoke, but the discomforts of the place were lost sight of in the illness which had suddenly come upon Trashi.

After the simple meal she said, "I am afraid I will not reach the "Fuyintang" (Gospel hall). I can scarcely breathe. I have so little light. It seems so dark just

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now, What about Bardo (purgatory)? When I am dead will the lamas hurt me? I have given them so little, and they are angry with me."

"Why should you die? Don't speak like that," said Tøndrop. "Let us go home again to-morrow."

"The Chinese will take our house now, we will get no peace there," she answered, wearily.

Then it grew dark, the snow commenced to fall, covering the stone table with a fabric of spotless white.

"Here is the book," she said, handing the precious volume to her son; "read it to me." Tøndrup, who almost knew the book by heart, rose and blew up the fire, and after throwing on some pine splinters, commenced reading aloud. Like one starving, Trashi seemed to swallow every word! Now and again she would ask the reader to repeat a verse. "Gyabkøn chenpo re!" ("What a great Saviour!") she exclaimed after the fifth chapter had been read.

"Oh, I am so happy" she said, a minute later. "It is only this about the next life. That seems so long. Will I be happy there?"

"Tse chima" (the next life) had troubled Trashi a good deal. The future was hazy. Was she to end in nothing, or be reborn into an animal, or what?

Just then the dirty, old, half Tibetan, half Chinese, landlady (or "Gyamaþø, neither Chinese nor Tibetan, as they are called) came in and saw Tøndrup reading. "I also have such a book," she said.

"Have you? Where did you get it?" asked Trashi eagerly.

"Oh, a few years ago three foreigners came past here from Dardsendo. They gave me a book, but I cannot read it. I will fetch it," she added, and soon brought back a blackened, smoked copy which resembled the one



TIBETAN CAMP AT THE BATANG ANNUAL FESTIVAL.

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Trashilhamo had. Tøndrup took it and read out the title: "Yohanen gi yiger kœpei trinsang shugso."

"It must be the same," said Tøndrup when he had opened it, and found it speak of "Yeshu" like the other one. "The Dsongye" (sergeant) continued the landlady, "said that these people came from the Fuyintang."

"Read it," said Trashilhamo. The landlady became interested in the book, seeing it was her own, and taking a pine torch held it up as Tøndrup read.

What a scene it was. Under the rude shelter of the stone hut, lay the dying woman, whose heart long years before had been touched by the gracious ministry of God's servants, and who had treasured the Divine message then given her, and throughout the days which followed endeavoured in her own weak way, to be true to what she knew of the truth. But the future life troubled her. Perhaps this other book, so like her own, would throw some light upon the secret of the grave, and give her some hope for the life which lay beyond.

And so, with eager eyes and willing ears, she listened as her boy read from the holy pages. Outside the snow was still falling; in the darkened hovel, high upon the mountain, God's message of love and salvation was being read in broken and faltering accents by the aid of the flickering torch held above the sacred Book. Never did the wonderful story so glow with comforting assurance as it did now, and to the feeble listener its music was like a foretaste of the land to which she was already hastening.

Some portions had to be read twice that their full import might be thoroughly grasped and understood. As the reader proceeded, the look of care and doubt passed from his mother's face, giving way to an expression of radiant triumph as the shadow lifted from the tomb and

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the glory of the resurrection from the dead flooded the little chamber.

“Ta mepei sog, ta mepei,” (“Everlasting life, everlasting life”) exclaimed the dying woman, all her doubts at last conquered, and her heart at length resting from all its care upon the Saviour’s love and promise.

“When I die” she said, after the wonderful words had been read, “you must not give my body to the birds of prey, nor to be burned or thrown into the river. I want to be buried like Lazarus, and Jesus will call me. Don’t put up any prayer flags either.”

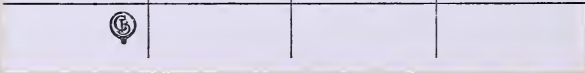
A little later Tøndrup resumed his reading, scarcely knowing what to think of his mother. She became exultant over the first three verses of the 14th chapter, about “Potrang” (palaces being prepared), and the glorious statement, “where I am, there shall ye be also.”

“Ta nyen-do” (“That will suffice”), she said, in her own local dialect. The landlady had gone long ago, leaving mother and son to themselves, and it was after midnight when Trashi asked Tøndrup to lie down on the sods close by.

“This is the Gospel Hall,” he heard her say before he fell asleep, and these were the last words to reach him from her lips. In the morning “The glorious Goddess” was found dead with her head on the low stone table, crowned with a fresh sprinkling of snow. In her hand she clasped her beloved Gospel, and in her mouth lay a piece of the sixth chapter, which Tøndrup sobbingly took from between her rows of white pearls and read:—

“Be of good cheer ; it is I ; be not afraid.
And He went up unto them into the ship ; and the wind ceased.”

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